

Islam. Orthodox View **priest Daniel Sysoev**

The book represents a critical analysis of Islamic doctrine as well as analysis of theological and mystic aspects of life and work of Muhammad, Islam founder in the framework of traditional orthodox comparative theology. The author reveals basic notions of Islam and demonstrates salvific differences of Christian religion. The book is intended for a wide range of readers.

Editorial note

Dear Reader!

We represent you the book by Daniil Sysoyev, a well-known public person and priest whose mortal life ended tragically on ноября, 20, 2009. According to one version of law enforcement investigation the murder was committed for religious reasons, because of his missionary and predicator activities among Muslims. The deceased was continually threatened by representatives of extremist group.

This edition *Islam. Orthodox View* is a print version of father Daniil's video lectures that circulated in the Internet. In his lectures the author gives a critical analysis of Islamic doctrine as well as analysis of theological and mystic aspects of life and work of Muhammad, Islam founder, in the framework of traditional orthodox comparative theology. Deep knowledge of Holy Bible and Holy Tradition and broad erudition allowed father Daniil to create a bright image of orthodox dispute.

The publishers put the author's oral performance into paper having preserved his personal intonation and individual peculiarity of father Daniil's speech. Profound scientific work has been undertaken to make this publication: the quotes were checked in accordance with the original text, uncertainties were edited, references to authorities as well as comments were provided throughout the book. All quotes are taken from *The Meaning of The Glorious Koran*. An explanatory translation by Marmaduke Pickthall with an introduction by William Montgomery Watt. Everyman's Library. London, 1992.

The book consists of three chapters: 1. On Islam; 2. Muhammad; 3. Answers to questions; father Daniil's biography and Primatial word of Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Kirill after the funeral service of priest Daniil Sysoyev. Every chapter reveals not only the basic notions of Islam, but also demonstrates the salvific differences of Christian religion. Although father Daniil always took a balanced and a reasonable approach to what he was speaking about, vouching his arguments with quotes from original texts, not all contemporary theologians fully accept his conclusions. Father Daniil's public speeches gave occasions to discussions among orthodox religious scholars.

Father Daniil was known by the freshness of idea and creative activity. He had a gift of a true preacher and a missionary, who showed his audience the only way to perfect joy in the world of many sorrows – the way to Christ. We hope that the living word of father Daniil will help and support people who seek for the true meaning of life. In loving memory of father Daniil.

Dearest readers, we beg your pardon for possible gaps.

1. On Islam

Today we'll speak not only about Islam as it is. Certainly, we need to touch upon this topic for so many people don't know anything about this religion – they know something about the traditional belief, something that gives this confession only positive characteristics... We'll speak about this too, but we'll also speak about those particular trends and forms that exist nowadays because so many people who haven't a slightest idea of what is going on say: "Well, Muslims make terrorist attacks, they are all terrorists", or on the contrary: "Muslims are not terrorists because this particular Muslim does not make a terrorist attack". It happens because people do not know the inner structure of the Muslim community, which is called ummah¹ in Arabic. This religious trend we can judge only from God's point of view.

Why do I say "from God's point of view"? We Christians try not to have our own point of view. It is not very interesting. As one English writer once said: "You may have hundred thousand points of view unless you find the only true. Then you'll have the only point of view – the true one".

First of all, it is necessary to say what Islam is as it is. Very often, when people start speaking about Islam they call it a religion. The notion "religion" characterizes some religious organization, church or sect where people come together to pray and solve some spiritual problems.

Actually, it is not quite true. To our mind, Islam seems to be far from traditional religion. It is very important to remember this because our conversation often turns out to be a conversation of two deafs. When we speak to Muslims we speak about one thing and they speak about something different. Consequently, we cannot understand each other because we put absolutely different ideas to one and the same words.

I have recently received the invitation to take Islam from one very good man as well as the explication of reasons for which he had taken it and why Islam is a true religion. That man was trying to explain me that Islam is a true religion because Muslims do not smoke or take drugs, all girls are virgins, and dissipation is not accepted, that is why Islam is a very good religion and the only hope for the progressive mankind.

Actually it is not quite true, for 80% of all heroine is planted in Islamic countries. But the thing is that a man looks at the religion as a system of life being. By the way, it is a peculiar trait. If we visit such Islamic sites as islam.ru or koran.ru we'll see that the majority of all materials represented there are devoted to the way we should build our life: articles about Arabian cuisine and

market; what standards of the length of beard , underwear, whatever it is exist in shariah etc. As you see, it is an attempt to build a global system of our life based on God's authority. In this sense Islam can be compared with such projects as national-socialistic and communist building, modern globalization etc., but not with the church – orthodox or catholic. It is a project of creating God's kingdom in our world with the help of divine means and under God's authority.

Moreover, a Muslim never divides religion and politics. It is very important to realize it for it is a typical trait of Islam as it is. We can imagine an Orthodox who lives, for example, in America among Papua New Guinea, i.e. among Muslims. As you see, Orthodoxy overwhelming the whole life of a man still assumes that he can live together with the order that is absolutely alien . Moreover, we know that it is a normal situation in Orthodoxy for we know that Christ's kingdom "is not from this world", as our God said. That is why an orthodox Christian can stay orthodox even in antichristian environment. Certainly, it is not normal for us that such environment exists, but it seems to be inevitable evil until the doomsday. As St Justin the Philosopher² once said, "We know that the Church will be persecuted until the doomsday, when God comes back and gives freedom to all of us". That is why persecution is a norm for us.

Why? Because we are aliens, we are representatives of God's kingdom in this world. We feel as if we are, and actually we are spies sent to the hostile territory. Situations may be more or less comfortable, but this world is a place where we can exist, at the same time, we do not hope that this world will become God's kingdom due to our efforts. We hope that God himself will interfere and restructure the Universe.

It is quite different in Islam. For Islam there is only service of God which is mainly realized via shariah, i.e. the law. This law overwhelms the man's physical, spiritual and social life, it defines his family life as all other spheres of his activities. So, shariah is a global project, and what seems to be the most interesting, it does not include God Himself. Here lies a radical difference between Islam and Orthodoxy: while in Orthodoxy everything is done by Almighty God, in Islam God's interference is subtle.

I'll try to explain. In Islam all deeds performed by a man, an angel or an atom are performed by God – Allah. It leads to a paradox according to which a man should do everything by himself. For the reason that there is too much of God there is practically no space for the man's freedom, and the only piece of freedom that he has is the freedom to choose and this is the only instrument with the help of which he can do anything. This is the paradox that follows and

it defines the Islamic mentality.

On the other hand, a man can do everything, for example, he can make a terrorist attack and regard it as a kind deed. Why? Because that was Allah who did it via the man. At the same time, the man knows that he cannot wait for Allah's help. Why he cannot do it? Because Allah does everything himself and you have no right to ask for anything because you are a puppet. You have only a small piece of freedom.

Omar Khayyam³ once said: "Ball no question makes of Ayes and Noes, But Here or There as strikes the Player goes". So do we, as Allah strikes go. What we see is a weird attempt to build God's kingdom in this world but without God himself, what really makes Islam look like communism or national socialism. By the way, it is interesting to notice that Islamic countries eagerly accepted socialism. A lot of Islamic countries are social: Syria, Iraq at the time when Saddam Hussein⁴ was its leader. A lot of Islamic countries cooperated with the Soviet Union. The cooperation was based not only on the arms export but also on the common ideology.

Now it is necessary to define what Islam is.

From Islamic point of view, the world is divided into two parts: the House of safety and the House of war⁵. The House of safety is the world where the shariah⁶ laws function. These countries belong to the House of safety and live in accordance with Allah's laws. Those who disobey these laws take a special place. According to shariah and the Quran⁷ on which shariah is based, all non-believers are divided into two groups: Polytheists and People of the Book. Polytheists are people who do not accept the Scripture authority and do not respect Creator, for example, atheists, Buddhists, Hindus, shamanists, anybody. They are subject to forcible conversion into Islam or to capital punishment, there is no third option. People of the Book, in the Quran these include Christians, Judaists and Zoroastrians, have right for life. They are given the honorary right for life on condition that they do not oppose Islam, do not criticize Islam, do not preach, pay jizyah⁸ (tax on belief), and also obey some restrictions: Christians must wear crosses on their backs, live in one-storey houses, have no horses. There are also some other restrictions connected with life.

Jizyah generally amounted to 80 per cent of the income. Meanwhile, if a Christian was inevitably harassed as a second-rate citizen, his life was not jeopardized. This should be recognized by right, for to think that Islam demands extermination of all Christians is absolutely wrong.

On the other hand conversion to Islam was encouraged. Because Islam has no doctrine of individual freedom (we will discuss it in due time), a person and

an individual will could be destroyed. According to the Quran, « Seek they other than the religion of Allah, when unto Him submitteth whosoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly, and unto Him they will be returned. »⁹ The expression « unwittingly » designates the lack of freedom, captivity, and servitude. This results in frightful statements that, for example, a Christian declaring his wish to adopt Islam in the presence of two Muslims is considered a Muslim, and whoever wishes to renounce is convicted to death. Indeed, defection in Islam means death or imprisonment for life. The latter is only applied in very few cases. Death has been and still is the most popular punishment. A recent case of death penalty for baptism was the execution of a Philippine Christian in Saudi Arabia in 2005. Another Christian convert, George, was executed in Yemen in 2004. The regulations are still active in shariah countries.

The other part of the globe is the land of war subdivided into: the House of Jihad and the House of truce. The House of war is the non-shariah land, a non-regulated community, the one to be brought to Islam. This is achieved through a Holy war, the Jihad¹⁰, practiced in several forms. Characteristically, jihad has the form of a mission, the *amicable Jihad*. Muslim missionary work is called jihad. And jihad is a mission indeed, but not only that. Jihad can involve hostility, pogroms, and poisoning enemy well water. According to current interpretation offered by some Muslim leaders in Saudi Arabia, the so-called wahhabis¹¹, jihad includes heroin traffic. This is why heroin is mainly cultivated in Afghanistan as an instrument to undermine enemy power. Destroying enemy manpower is part of the war, pure military tactics.

The House of war is subdivided in two categories, as I said before. First, there is the land of hostility. The House of Jihad is to be annihilated tooth-and-nail because it opposed Islam in one way or another. Every possible means could be used against such countries. They are listed among jihad rules. Accordingly, all male, and old people, must be killed, and women and children should be taken prisoners: women to be used as sexual slaves, and children to be converted to Islam under compulsion. Special treatises are written on jihad (also in Russian). The rules have been adopted in Islam since the days of Muhammad in the 7th century.

The House of truce is where Islam makes a contract with non-Islamic government. This means that Muslims can more or else follow the shariah within the non-Islamic community. This is the House of truce. Why so? Because the people, or rather the community allowing Muslims to follow the shariah is actually non-Islamic, abnormal, and thus should be destroyed and made Islamic without victimizing the Muslim brethren. A truce is therefore

concluded until the whole community is reduced to Islam.

How does one adopt Islam? What should one do? In the same way as Orthodox Christianity involves belief in the Holy Trinity, the God-man, the Creation, as well as baptism and communion, Islam specifies the rules and events that make a Muslim. So there are the celebrated five pillars of Islam often confused with the six articles of faith.

The first and probably most important of the five pillars of Islam is the Shahadah. A man professing the Shahadah, i.e. confession of faith, before at least two or, better, four Muslims becomes a Muslim.

There are certain websites where one can type one's name under "denomination", click "I adopt Islam", and become a Muslim automatically. For this means professing one's faith before all Muslims visiting the Internet at the moment. As a matter of fact, however, Shahadah (the Shahid is the one confessing Shahadah, a confessor or martyr, witness) is the confession of no god but Allah and Muhammad as His prophet (recitation of the Islamic witness of faith, "There is no god but God and Muhammad is the messenger of God" – *ed.*). The statement is pronounced in Arabic though, in principle, Russian or any other language is admissible.

The four remaining pillars are to be professed too.

The second pillar is the obligatory prayer, namaz¹². The third one is zakah, the obligatory charity¹³. This generally amounts to 1/40 of the income paid annually in the Ramadan. The fourth pillar is Ramadan¹⁴ fasting, and the fifth is the hajj, Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca.

Many believe that jihad represents the sixth obligatory pillar of Islam. But in strict Sunni interpretation jihad is only obligatory in the countries oppressing Islam, i.e. in the *House of Jihad* proper. It is not prescribed elsewhere.

How are the pillars of Islam to be described and interpreted in terms of the Orthodox Church, and in the Absolute?

(1) The first pillar, the confession of faith, is by no means limited to "There is no god but God and Muhammad is the messenger of God", adding the so-called aqidah¹⁵(creeds) containing, first, the Allah, a being never described as a person (a matter of prime importance). Islam never personifies Allah.

The question of whether Allah could be referred to as a person was once posed in negotiations between the Roman Catholic Church and Islamic ummah. It occurred that there was no Arabic term for the notion. Our "person" is rendered in Arabic as "a lad". A person is identified with a lad ... This is quite wrong and we cannot use it. One cannot refer to God as a lad! And there are no other terms for Allah as a person.

When debating the issue with Muslims, or just discussing everyday

problems ... Talking with a Muslim in Turkey this summer, for instance, I asked: “What is Allah to you?” He said: “To me Allah is a great power, very remote, and very obscure”.

No Muslim knows what Allah is. It is a power creating the world, giving the laws, making all things run, and quite vague. The Quran says on the subject: “Allah maketh the provision wide for whom He will of His bondmen, and straiteneth it for whom (He will)”.¹⁶ Hence the curse of Israelites and Christians believing themselves to be God’s natural or adopted children. And the conception of God as a remote power demanding worship and actually incomprehensible!

There is a conception of Allah’s attributes. What attributes? They are not just qualifications but properties that Allah himself discovers about himself. The point is whether they are compatible with his nature. Two schools in medieval Islam disputed the subject: some maintained that Allah did discover some qualities in himself, his own inherent properties; others argued that Allah appeared as he wished, keeping his substance to himself. The attributes are considered of great importance even though Islam cannot settle the issue. They are known as the 99 names of Allah.

You might have seen bead charms in cars, or Muslims fingering green beads. They count the names of Allah. The action has a magic sense though Sufis¹⁷ think it is a way to heat up one’s love for Allah. Anyway, this is evidence of borrowing from Christianity.

The attributes are contradictory. For instance, the Loving, Gracious, Beneficent – not Love but loving those who love him. There is the Speaking attribute. Among others, there is the Tyrant, Author of Evil. That is, in Islamic tradition Allah is beyond good and evil, author of both good and evil. The Quran says that, “Nor did they (the two angels) teach it to anyone till they had said: We are only a temptation, therefore disbelieve not (in the guidance of Allah). And from these two (angles) people learn that by which they cause division between man and wife; but they injure thereby no-one save by Allah’s leave”.¹⁸ Yet he makes one stray or keep straight at his will. That is, both good and evil are of him.

A hadith¹⁹ ascribed to Muhammad reads as follows: “He whom Allah leadeth, he indeed is led aright, while he whom Allah sendeth astray – they indeed are losers”²⁰, so the fates decree.

In Islamic view, archangel Gabriel comes into the view of Allah on the fortieth day of conception and asks what is destined for each particular infant. And Allah gives him a list of designations. Archangel Gabriel immediately assigns an angel to attach that register of future good and evil deeds to the man.

In addition, the list describes one's predestination: i.e. as a dweller in heaven or in hell. All these are attached to one on the fortieth day of conception.

More fundamentalist Muslims believe in Allah's geometric constraint. "Prominent" Wahhabis argue that Allah can travel. He resides in the seventh heaven and descends to the first heaven on Ramadan night, the night of revelation, to hear prayers in the best possible way. So one should always appeal to Allah on the night of revelation when he is close by and listening.

Islam rejects the divine triad: several surah contest the Trinity. Interestingly, they all seem right. Conceiving Allah as the third of three, that is, one of three Gods, is an unpardonable sin. Anyone can see why! Can there be three individual Gods?! One ayah in the Quran describes Allah asking Jesus: "O Jesus, son of Mary! Didst thou say unto mankind: Take me and my mother for two gods beside Allah ?". Of course, Jesus says he never did²¹.

Muhammad simply misunderstood Christianity. Moreover, all condemnations of Christians in the Quran seem totally justified. We also anathematize those who think so. Could one accept the idea of three Gods? Would there be room for three? For He is God omnipresent.

So how can one treat the issue of who and what Allah is? Of course, the General Council at Constantinople in 1180 concerning the God of Muhammad decided that Allah was totally unrelated to scriptural God. Allah was invented by Muhammad who misinterpreted the Old and New Testament. Indeed, formal logic excludes identification of Allah with God of the Bible. God should have attributes of genuine Divinity. Principal divine attributes are by no means evident in Muhammad's doctrine of God as a remote power with obscure attributes. The only substantial attribute is the eternal Quran!

The idea of the eternal Quran existing in parallel with God is very problematic. Some describe an eternal green throne erected before Allah, with the splendid Quran volume in green morocco, the Source of Decrees²² mentioned in the Quran. Archangel Gabriel copied each surah and made Muhammad learn it by heart. Thus the Quran was brought to Earth. How did Muslims know what was written on the green throne? It appears that the main ornament of the green throne was the inscription "To Muhammad". Yet this seems an informal doctrine of sorts.

Meanwhile, the dogma of the eternal Quran paralleling Eternal Allah survives, indicating Muslim renunciation of monotheism they advocate so vehemently. Coexistence of two eternal entities is paradoxical.

Moreover, the history of the Quran demonstrates an interesting way to denounce polytheism. The Quran denounces Arabs regarding three goddesses as the daughters of Allah. To quote: "Have ye thought upon Al-Lat and Al-«Uzza

and Manat, the third, the other? Are yours the males and His the females? That indeed were an unfair division! They are but names which ye have named, ye and your fathers, for which Allah hath revealed no warrant” (*an-Najm: The Star* 53:19–23).

Arabs actually worshipped three female deities: Venus, Moon and Star – there were celestial deities. The three goddesses were considered to be daughters of Mecca’s main Deity²³. At a later time when Muslims met real-life Jews and Christians rather than heretic inhabitants of Arabia, they came to identify their Allah with God revealed in the Scripture. But we should never identify the God revealed in the Holy Writ with the God worshipped by Muslims. They are different, and we cannot say that we and Muslims have one God.

Can we take an unbiased attitude on the matter today? Objectively speaking, there is a mental idol created by Muhammad. That is, the Allah described by the Quran does not exist, it is a distorted picture, a parody of true God, imposed on Muhammad by a force of evil. This is the most possible impartial judgment of the concept of Allah to date.

Nicholas of Serbia²⁴ told an interesting tale of old days when people perceive God as a very distant campfire or light. They saw it from afar without knowing what it was. But when God approaches and is quite near, we see the triple fire of Divinity. So one can say that God in Islam as a very distant Deity, a gleam of true God, distorted in Muhammad’s mind and thus eclipsing true God. It was a mental dummy of true notions.

One finds preposterous notions of God in the Quran! For instance, God is said to invent sophisticated tortures for His enemies. He is said to love whoever love Him and hate whoever hate Him. And whoever hate Him would be made happy with sheer torture: they would burn in hell, and He would give them a new skin each time, to prolong suffering²⁵. This would last forever, and they would be given molten iron to drink.

Imagine a simple, ordinary man offended and unable to overcome his passions. What would he do? Would he take vengeance on the offender? And if he had infinite power? He would avenge himself infinitely. This means that the man drew God from his own nature. But his nature was not perfect! Not to mention the Gospels where God says: for if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? But I say to you “love your enemies, bless them that curse you... and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you ; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust”.²⁶. Logically, the Christian

notion has more in common with true God than Islamic which is too human-like if you will. This is the case of a pure anthromorphism.

The second article of faith for Muslims reads as follows: Muslims must believe in angels. Strictly speaking, aqidah maintains that a Muslim must believe in Allah, his angels, his Book, his envoys, and the last day²⁷. These are the six points.

Angels are conceived by Muslims as spirits of light always following Allah's wishes. According to Islam, angels cannot fall. The only case of a fallen angel is Iblis – our Satan – turning shaytan, e.g. Satan. Yet whether Iblis is an angel or a supreme jinn is a matter of argument. Some authorities say that Iblis is a mutinous angel, while others perceive him as jinn. Angels have variable wings, and various stories are told about them. Thus archangel Gabriel presumably has 600 wings and goes bathing in a spring every day when drops from his wings turn to pearls. The fantastic tales of Arabia illustrate an idealistic notion of angels.

In addition to angels, there are spirits designated as jinn²⁸. Jinn are beings of non-angelic substance, created of smokeless fire and existing in the two types: Muslim jinn and heathen jinn.

Where does the notion of Muslim jinn come from? One day at the very beginning of his life Muhammad visited a town in Arabia. He had no army of his own and wished to preach his Word. Driven away and very much upset, he was inspired to think that his was not a fruitless effort for jinn of all Arabia came to hear his preaching and adopted Islam. This meant that he had accomplished his mission. Muhammad had this consolation. And that was the origin of Muslim jinn.

Unlike angels, jinn are male and female. They can intermarry and marry human beings. Whether the shariah should approve of marriage with jinn was the subject of wide speculation in Islamic newspapers of Tatarstan in 2004! Why? I don't know why the issue was so urgent in Tatarstan in 2004, but the case is on record. There it was in Tatar newspapers, as large as life.

Jinn can be injurious to man: smother him or put an evil curse on him. Mutinous heathen jinn are led by Iblis – Satan, shaytan. In Islamic view, Iblis and his jinn will eventually be punished and cast into hell-fire along with those who defeat Islam.

How can we interpret the view? The question is not of mere tales and lore, but rather of a grave distortion of spiritual realities. The vivid and active world of spirits, and the notion of that world, is distorted to prevent human struggle against evil spirits. For if a jinn can be converted to Islam without any reservations, why not negotiate?!

Islam demands systematic struggle against the world of evil spirits. Allah himself is presumed to defend human beings. One possessed – a common case in Islamic world (when preaching in Izhevsk, I saw a Muslim woman trembling and fainting when the Gospel was recited) – should read the Quran to pacify a jinn.

This, however, is hardly true for the Islamic world seems terribly afraid of evil curse. Visitors in Turkey or Egypt, and in the East at large, would notice multiple apotropaic charms. They are taken quite seriously: a Fatima sleeve, for example, is the only way to repudiate assaulting jinn. That is why Muslims always appear panic stricken. In Christian terms this is explained by the fact that man is helpless against the Devil's attacks, living in the shadow of death unless protected by baptism.

The second article of faith for Muslims as opposed to Christians is the belief in the sacred Scriptures. For Muslims, the Quran is an eternal being along with Allah. As it should only exist in Arabic text, translations are never regarded as adequate. Among the first expressions in the Quran is the "translation of senses". This results in Islamic view of the impossibility of adequate translation for the Quran. The Quran represents Allah's direct speech in Arabic. The idea of God using a temporal language to speak in eternity is also anthropomorphic, attributing variability to God. Not to mention the fact that the idea of an eternal reality parallel to God without being God is certainly polytheistic.

So concerning the Scripture, Muslims maintain that "your Bible is not the Divine Word because it contains both God's words and tales of events".

How can we explain to a Muslim that the Scripture is the Divine Word? In The Holy Writ is the Divine Word for us for God speaks in Word, and in action. Take a case of schooling: school methods include lecturing and demonstrating the case on the blackboard. Or else, one can use working models. So God teaches mankind by divine Revelation with His Word, appearing in action, word, punishment, preaching, demonstration, etc. Moreover, unlike the Quran, the Scripture is the Book of the Covenant between God and mankind, the Union of the Creator and His creatures. On the other hand, the Quran assumes no covenant of God and people. The Quran is a one-way communication, a commandment to man, instructions of sorts.

The Quran stories frequently contradict the Scripture. Thus Solomon's greatest deed was, according to the Quran, conversing with jinn and beasts²⁹. Similarly, the Quran describes Virgin Mary as a sister of Moses, and Amman in the Book of Esther as Pharaoh's Vizier in the days of Joseph³⁰. There are many other actual errors. The Quran contains 225 contradictions even noticed

by Muslims³¹. They are explained by *revoked* and *replaced* ayat.

The Church therefore regards the Quran as Muhammad's invention largely inspired by evil forces. Why so? Because we are convinced that the revelation was transmitted via ... Yet the revelation did occur! We must also know that Muhammad had a genuine revelation and it was evident. According to Aishah, Muhammad's favorite wife, Muhammad trembled, turned pale or red, or sweated when the revelation occurred. He often fainted, sometimes foaming. Muhammad said that at times he had a headache or heard bells ringing in his head, getting louder and terribly painful, and then he could not remember what had been transmitted³².

Of course, we could regard the symptoms as evidence of revelation. There certainly was a spiritual intervention though by no means divine. Christian would describe the stories of Muhammad's followers describe as demonical possession. Thus the case of a child cured by Jesus Christ after the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor³³, (the child's symptoms) appears in line with Muhammad's. Moreover, this is confirmed by Muhammad himself. Muhammad first thought that he was attacked by an evil spirit as he was smothered. He said that archangel Gabriel appeared, strangled him and made him read a text he could not understand. For a long time Muhammad believed that he was assaulted by an evil spirit, and even wanted to take his life. He was tortured by suicidal thoughts after the first revelation, which for us is a striking case of enticing trickery. He was only dissuaded by Khadijah, his first and elder wife.

Unfortunately, however, Muhammad became convinced of being God's delegate. Therefore the Church rejects the Quran and will never regard it as God's Word or allow bringing the Quran and the true Word of God together.

Belief in delegates also distinguishes Islam from Christianity and Judaism. Interestingly, the everlasting identity of Allah's message is a principal concept of Islam. In Christianity and Old, and even New – modern Talmudic – Judaism the concepts are more or less variable... In this sense Islam has even less to do with Christianity than modern Talmudic Judaism, let alone Old Judaism, a true precursor of Christianity.

Prophets are sent to a certain man with a certain will of God depending on that man, to make a covenant, a union. That is, a prophet heralds a covenant with God gradually revealed. Revelation in Christian view grows depending on man's or, to be precise, human spiritual growth, culminating not in the Word but in the appearance of God Himself, the Incarnation of Christ becoming Man. There prophetic mission ends when prophets herald Incarnation, the ultimate revelation. This is told in the Epistle to Jews recited on Christmas Eve. God

who spoke of prophets before the Fathers many times and in many ways ultimately spoke to us in His Son Whom he put at the head of everything and through Whom He created the times.

In Islam, monotheism is the only message. Allah could only announce to mankind that no one was to be worshipped apart from himself. Consider also that some hadith reports mention 124 thousand messengers invariably maintaining that no one deserves worship but Allah who should be obeyed.³⁴ That was all the news!

A discussion with Muslims on the Internet concerned the Quran as a fresh message compared to the Bible. What was Muhammad charged with? What gaps in the Bible were to be filled in by the Quran? Apparently, the Quran brought no news except permission to partake of suet. But suet had been formally permitted by the New Testament. So there was nothing new even in that point.

The qiblah³⁵ – that is, the direction of worshipping (salat, namaz), was different, and that was probably all there was. The Quran offers nothing that the Bible does not. The Quran is a trivial doctrine if any. The Quran has nothing to add to the Bible, and nothing to reveal of God, simply overriding the true statements and rejecting some of the revelations.

We are coming now to the question of messengers. Those described in the Quran widely disparate from our common notions. They all have their biblical names like Noah, Joseph, Abraham, Isaac and James, Adam and Eve, Mary Mother of God, Jesus Christ, John the Baptist, King David or Solomon. But in fact they depart both from the Holy Writ and simple historical reality. Indeed, many scriptural characters are known from historical studies supporting Scripture texts. By way of example, consider the attitude to Jesus Christ, critical in Christianity. It may be argued that Muslims respect Jesus Christ but this is wrong for they know no Jesus Christ. The Messiah, Isa of the Quran is fundamentally different from Jesus Christ. First, by his name. A loan translation of Jesus in Arabic would yield Jesuah or Jeshuah but never Isa. Arabic Christians never refer to Jesus Christ as Isa but always as Jesua, to translate the Word of God as accurately as possible. Characteristically, Muhammad explains the loan translation by the fact that he knew the real name but could not adjust it to rhythm of the Quran. Can you imagine the name of Jesus Christ tuned up to the Quran?

Well, we will not quarrel about the name. It is not that important for the loan translation could be much worse. The point is that Christ is not seen as God but as a creature, contrary to the Gospel and Early Prophets. There are apocryphal stories of inconceivable miracles like animating clay birds in young

childhood or talking at birth. Interestingly, the apocryphal “Arabic Gospel of Childhood” used by Muhammad for his story describes the new-born Jesus saying, “I am God sent to the Earth by My Father”, while Muhammad’s version reads “I am but a creature”. So Muhammad even distorted the apocryphal text.

There is another story of a meal he got out of Allah at the instance of his disciples. The Last Supper was thus combined with the story of feeding the multitudes in an affluent meal served by a magic tablecloth. The wonders are quite absurd.

Yet Christian and Islamic notions of Christ mainly differ in their interpretation of Christ’s death. Jews and atheists are known to reject the idea of Resurrection. Muslims reject the Crucifixion. They believe that Jesus Christ was not crucified but hidden by Allah substituting another victim. It was either Simon of Cyrene made to carry the Cross or Judas Iscariot. Christ, however, was taken to heaven and will return at the end of times to destroy Christendom, break the crosses, marry and die, and be buried at Muhammad’s side. Burial ground is reserved for Jesus Christ in Medina where Muhammad lies.

So the Jesus Christ described by the Quran differs radically from genuine Christ, and even from the historical Christ, for the Crucifixion theory is corroborated by every historian. All the sources, even other than Scriptural, relating to Jesus Christ as a person initially describe the crucifixion. For us this is the key message. “But we give the good news of Christ on the cross, a hard thing to the Jews, and a foolish thing to the Gentiles; But to those of God’s selection, Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power and the wisdom of God”³⁶.

Incidentally, here lie the origins of the fearful hatred of the Cross. Destroying the cross has been among the principal Muslim actions in occupied territories. And, to repeat, the Muslim Christ would destroy the crosses.

In addition, Muslims are prohibited to partake of wine. The Quran banned wine but not drug already in use at the time. A doubtful hadith says that everything springing from poppy is blessed. Anyway, Muslims have always used narcotic drugs. This is a nude fact and it has been so since the days of Muhammad.

Why then the wine ban? For us it means the ban on the Holy Communion. Christians were periodically persecuted in Islamic countries because of the Communion wine. So they had to use raisin wine to escape oppression.

And most interestingly, Muslims venerate Alexander of Macedonia as a prophet. He is said to be a prophet of Allah. But Alexander believed himself to be a son of Zeus, and was a zealous partisan of polytheism. Yet he is respected as a genuine prophet and described in the Quran as Dhu al-Qarnayn, “the two-horned”, for his two-horned casket. The Two-Horned indeed... There is a

fascinating story of his coming to a dirty, stinking spring where the Sun descends to each night. According to Muhammad, the stinking spring is located in the Far West. While Muslims of today feel very awkward and try to evade the confusion, the Quran text definitely indicates that the Sun goes down into that particular stinking spring. This is one example of popular errors resulting from Muhammad's ignorance.

Muslim belief in the Last Day also contrasts with Christianity. In Muslim doctrine, death occurs as follows: the soul leaves the body with the help of a certain angel; it is then judged by Allah and returns to the body. A Muslim's soul remains in the dead body until Resurrection Day, and enjoys it. I kept asking Muslims in vain what pleasure one could find in a grave. I asked common people and imams, and no one informed me. More often the answer was: "This is mysterious delight you can never understand". And that's all there is to it.

Accordingly, a sinner's soul remains in the dead body and is tortured by angels. And so one lies in his grave to the Last Day, enjoying it or suffering.

Islam specifies the following before the end of the world: Jesus (Isa) shall return to Earth, destroy all Christians, break all crosses, marry, and worship Allah. Moreover, he will not lead the Muslim prayer, the namaz, only assisting the leading imam of the time, the Mahdi. Then al-Dajjal, a counterpart to our Antichrist, shall appear, to be killed by Allah. Finally, angel Izrail shall blow his trumpet and all the world shall die: people, jinn, and angels. Then Izrail shall kill himself by order of Allah. And then Allah shall raise the dead and they shall come before Allah, and Allah will judge them. Muslims will have their sins produced, confess and receive absolution. More sinful Muslims will be cast into hell but led out by Muhammad a thousand years after. Those who died in Jihad, the Holy War – terrorists and the like – shall not be judged but taken straight to paradise. Hadith say that their wounds would open and shed musk on resurrection. I for one am not particularly delighted by the scene but they seem to like it I don't know why. This defies reason.

Others shall cross the As-Sirat³⁷ bridge to paradise. The bridge shall be as a razor blade for sinners but broad and smooth for the righteous. Muslims would ride the rams they had sacrificed for Greater Bayram³⁸. A worthless ram would stumble and fall down into fire. Those riding good rams – i.e. having made good sacrifice – would come to paradise.

Muslim paradise is unlike Christian conceptions. It is, to put it mildly, a special place to make great and vigorous sex, delight in heavenly beauty, walk in the gardens and enjoy one's meals. Some hadith provide for three million dishes per day and ability to eat them all. In addition, there would be 124

thousand houris per day. A houri is a being – not at all human – of variable appearance and black-eyed as a pearl to enjoy, etc. She instruments sexual pleasure alone. There would be 124 thousand every day, and endurance enough to cope. According to St Simeon of Thessaloniki, Muslims are promised “paradise gardens filled with all kinds of dissipation”³⁹. This is the actual promise of afterlife, impossible as it seems.

Moreover, one shall never see Allah except as a misty Moon from afar, as one hadith puts it. And Allah would ask: “Are you content? Would you like any more?” A man would say, “Oh yes, please”. And Allah would fulfill all his carnal desires, but no more.

How should we interpret this? In my opinion, Muslim paradise is fully practicable. Church Fathers mention succubi and incubi⁴⁰, demons of lust. This is a case of insatiable... like bulimia, excessive or insatiable appetite due to eating disorder. It would be more like hell for us.

Christians believe in the Kingdom of Heaven, life with God, Divine Communion as primary delight of eternity, and personal Divine Union, Divine Vision and state of Grace. Therefore we can neither accept nor conceive of Muhammadan delight.

Another point of Muslim doctrine is belief in divine decree. According to Hadith and the Quran, Allah told a pen to write 50 thousand years before Creation, and the pen began writing down everything to come until the end of days. This was how a world program was written down. Only the Quran was excluded for it was created. So Allah is the creator of all deeds, both evil and good. He creates good and evil.

In a recent debate held on 3 февраля, Polosin⁴¹ unwittingly supported the doctrine of Allah as the creator of evil. For us the idea is inconceivable as there is no evil and what does not exist cannot be created. Evil has no proper substance, it is the distorted good, perverted good abusing divine good works, and God will not disfigure His creation. God the good and merciful, absolutely just and holy will not tolerate evil.

According to Islam, however, Allah enables a murderer to kill, an adulterer to commit adultery, and a clement man to give alms. Allah is believed to have two will types: the approving and the disapproving one. This is not permissiveness but will. An example of disapproving will is making a man a murderer and then punishing him for it. The only line of freedom for man in Islam is a thin line of choice. A man may follow or not follow the way of Allah. The source of freedom is obscure. While refuting original sin and perversity of human nature, Islam proposes a nafs, cognate of the Hebrew nefesh (soul) opposing the will of Allah for reasons unknown. Different Islamic trends have

different opinion on the subject. Some deny free will without reserve, others believe that man may wish and only Allah can fulfill. In fact it repeats an old lie. Remember Adam blaming “the wife You gave unto me” for his own sin. That is, the sin was committed by the wife God palmed on Adam. My wife is to blame and not myself. In fact, the blame is put on God, and man declines reform. This invariably leads to theomachy. Thus Islam and Christianity are totally opposite and incompatible on doctrinal grounds.

Other pillars of Islam likewise differ from the Protoplast conception.

(2) Adoration (namaz) – significantly, not prayer. Namaz texts prescribe man’s attitude to God with no supplication whatever. Personal appeal in prayer is allowed periodically, though not highly approved of due to the doctrine of predestination: the divine decree would take care of your personal needs.

Of course, Islam allows for private prayer but namaz is the rite of adoration. Interestingly, ritual is the key element of namaz. If ritual is broken, namaz is invalid and has to be repeated. Allah seems to be rather indifferent to man’s heart which is the first consideration for us Christians. Thus a night service celebrated in all form will be void if the mind is indulging in a flight of fancy. Prayer without consideration and sincere concern is worthless to God. “Man sees the face and God the heart.” God sees man’s sincere wish. Allah cares not.

It is evident for us Christians that namaz is authored by someone who simply cannot see into a man’s heart. In Christian view, only God and not angels can know man’s inner life. And the angel dictating the Quran did not know man’s heart, being mainly concerned with ritual. Similarly, heathens making Christians celebrate the rite of adoration never required any sincere concern in the process. They even used to say: you may worship anyone in your heart, just put some incense in the fire, and that’s it. Very much like Islam, isn’t it?

(3) The third pillar is often described as alms. But it is nothing of the kind. Zakah is an obligatory charity. Traditionally, it amounts to 1/40 of the income though there is a fixed annual sum equivalent to 9 g silver. For the first, it must be public. Zakah is generally announced in public, often in a mosque: so-and-so donates so much. This is not universal but most frequent. And then, zakah is only donated to Muslims or potential converts. By contrast, Christians should give alms to anyone. The proverbial charitable Samaritan helped anyone, Christian or not, believers and nonbelievers, as we should help everyone in the name of the Lord⁴². As regards the alms, God forbids ostensible Christian charity.

Incidentally, sectarians boasting of great charity but actually far less

charitable than Orthodox Christians, often use charity to promote their wrong beliefs.

(4) The fourth pillar concerns the Ramadan month of fasting. Early Muslims in the days of Muhammad kept the fast in a Christian manner: 40 days, and then one month abstaining from meat and milk products as Christians do today. Then Muhammad said it was too hard, and it was revealed to him that daylight fasting would suffice. Accordingly, Ramadan fasting involves abstinence from drink and food, sexual intercourse and, funny enough, cupping glasses (other bans are detailed by the Shariah) from the dawn to the moment when a black thread is indistinguishable from the white one out-of-doors. Then comes the first meal after fasting when you may eat anything you like. I visited Cairo in a Ramadan. It was a pathetic sight. Imagine a Muslim milking a goat in the street in broad daylight, the milk flowing on the asphalt. Of course, the goat had to be milked because of the swelling udder but why make a pool on the asphalt? Late in the day the streets are quite dangerous with motorcycles and fast cars almost touching the pavement when Muslims are racing to their meals. Tables are brought out with shish kebab and all that piled and everyone waiting for muezzin's⁴³ call from the minaret to start the meal. Then the call comes like a factory siren and they all fall almost diving on the food at once. I was rather amused because they seemed to regard fasting as dieting rather than a way of spiritual growth. Yet it should be realized for the sake of objectivity that many good Muslims prefer in-depth study of the Quran during the Ramadan. This certainly resembles our fasting devoted to fundamental knowledge of the Holy Writ. Thus Islam retains some elements of Christian fasting. On the other hand, Islamic fasting involves no efforts to drive one's passions. Fasting is rather used as an instrument of devotion to Allah in parallel to namaz. The key element of the fast for Christians is the struggle against gluttony, anger, and other passions. Islam knows no such notions. Passions are not to be driven in Islam because they are all natural. Man's present condition is natural for Islam, with the exception of Sufi who recognize the struggle against passions though only to destroy the ego and unite with Allah.

(5) Then, the fifth pillar is the pilgrimage to Mecca, the hajj. Originating in heathen days, the hajj copies the heathen rite and remains obscure. Why kiss the black rock, for instance? Caliph Omar said he did not know why and only followed the herald's example. The custom seems superstitious. Indeed, sacrifice is not important and has nothing to do with redemption, it is simply senseless. Mercifully, Muslims have abandoned pagan notions of Allah living on sacrificial flesh. Neither do they believe in Hebrew conception of sacrifice reminiscent of the sin and redemption, nor in Christian purifying sacrifice.

Why then sacrifice camels or rams? We see it as worthless and certainly superstitious.

Stoning is likewise inconceivable. Many people are pelted to death with stones in Mecca every year. They think it means stoning the Satan. I doubt that one can stone a genie or an angel for they are hard to hit. This is mere superstition. And, of course, death comes at the end. While old rites were to prepare men to the Coming of The Lord, modern hajj rites are mentally void and thus obscure. Muslims would generally explain that white robes symbolize spiritual purity, and that is all. Now Orthodox Christians are known to wear white robes for baptism. White robes were also worn by Hebrews on the Day of Atonement, the Yom Kippur⁴⁴. The rest is incomprehensible.

They say, “We do not know. Allah said we should and so we do”. Why should they do so and so in namaz?⁴⁵ No idea. That is, some things that are absurd and inconceivable in doctrinal terms are done just because they were told to do so. This is indeed superstitious. Christians regard it as superstition to be rejected in baptism.

(6) And finally, the sixth pillar is jihad. It is a mission of sorts for Islam. Why is it omitted in standard regulations? Muslims refusing jihad as the sixth pillar do not oppose it. A Muslim cannot oppose jihad because it is mentioned in Quranic ayah 53. They generally explain that jihad cannot be universal and thus cannot be a pillar for all. And that is that.

This is common for all Muslims in the world. Yet Islam is not solid. There are four principal schools, and two fundamentally different kinds of Islam: the so-called Euro-Islam (European Islam), and the traditional Islam of the Arabic world.

The Euro-Islam includes, for example, our Islam confessed by all Turkic nations in Russia. It is referred to as jadidism⁴⁶, a doctrine emerging in 1809 and adapting Islam to traditional notions and traditional laws of Bashkirs, Tatars, and other Turkic people. The resulting doctrine is not considered as genuine Islam by Arabic Muslims. And this is fair enough as jadidism actually involves non-Islamic notions like the holy examples, pagan remedies for the evil eye, etc.

Tatars generally have vague notions of Islam, saying that, “we are Muslims because we are Tatars, but our Islam means national identity. If I am not Muslim, I am not Tatar either”. Thus Islam is identified with nationalism.

Remember that nationalism resulted from damnation. According to the Bible, there were no nations before the Tower of Babel⁴⁷, and different nations resulted from the damnation of the Tower of Babel, to prevent them from building together a city in defiance of God. Thus deifying nation is defying

God, the God of all People, the Maker of Universe. According to Father Sophrony Sakharov⁴⁸, “if nationalism is not overcome, Christian mission fails”. If people cling to nationality rather than search for absolute truth, they will never find God.

Of course this presumably mild Islam is destructive because of the nationalist trends, as evident in Tatarstan today appearing as a symbol of nationalism. We will never agree to it. As a matter of fact, Arabic Muslims are no more enthusiastic. And I will certainly agree with Arabic Muslims on the subject: Truth is more important than nation, truth is independent of nation, and one cannot be Muslim because one is Tatar. Similarly, one cannot be Christian because one is Russian. Christianity does not depend on nation but rather on belief in the Lord uniting all people in the Church universal where there is “no Greek nor Jew, and no barbarian nor Scythian” and where the damnation of the Tower of Babel is removed. For people serve God in different language but worship God of all people in the Church universal. Accordingly we will hold this Thursday service in Krutitsky town house both in Tatar, and in Old Slavonic, celebrating the Church universal.

In the Caucasus, Shariah, or the divine Law of Islam, was combined with the traditional Turkic code, the adat, to produce a peculiar synthesis. Some of the regulations emerging in the guise of Islam actually disagree with it. The feud is the classic example. Feud runs contrary to Islamic practices, and was disapproved of by Muhammad who promoted communal Shariah Courts. Meanwhile, feudal practices persist as part of the adapted heathen code.

Additionally, veneration of hallowed places, holy springs, and saints is widespread in the Caucasus, obviously contradicting Islam that is unaware of holiness as communion with the Lord. The only holiness in Islam is that of dervishes. A dervish is a man of exceptional abilities generally regarded as not quite agreeable. There is a saying that miracles are the menses of saints and righteous men, that is, something unclean that righteous men have. Moreover, dervishes generally produce miracles of occult nature, and admit it. They describe the process as a trance, a certain state not invoked by Allah but rather by intercourse with jinn.

Persistent veneration of saints among Caucasian, and some Arabic nations, is indicative of Islam’s inhumanity. People want saints because that is their nature. Man wants to be holy. God created man for holiness. And man looks for sacred objects. Islam provides nothing of the kind and thus falls short of God’s message.

And finally, two more Islam types emerge in Russia. One recruits young people regarding Islam as a more vigorous style of living. They think that

Russian Orthodox Church is good for old wives and strong men should choose Islam. In my opinion, it suits teenagers more. Anyway, this is why Russian converts adopt the more radical form of Islam, the Wahhabis.

The other type is the female Islam when a Russian wife of a Muslim, or a man marrying a Muslim woman, converts under the influence of her or his mate. Shariah permits a Muslim to marry a Christian, a Jew, or a Zoroastrian, but not the reverse. Nevertheless, the latter is a rather widespread occurrence now.

Similarly popular today is the sufism, an Islamic trend formally condemned as heretic and describing God as an impersonal power capable of absorbing and dissolving man which is, strangely enough, the ultimate goal of human being! The trend is also very popular in some intellectual circles.

Let's discuss Wahhabis. It is criticized severely and sometimes referred to as a sect though President Putin justly disproved the term. And he was absolutely right in doing so for Wahhabis is not a sect. Rather it is the purest remnant of the core Islam, and the official confession in Saudi Arabia adopting the Wahhabis version along with some other Arabic countries. This particular version of hanbali madhhab⁴⁹ tracing back to the 8th century accepts the Quran and Sunnah⁵⁰ – the prophetic tradition – as the only sources of Islamic law, rejecting any possible change.

It was founded by Muhammad ibn Abd Al-Wahhab⁵¹. He initiated the destruction of all sacred places in Arabia, and the removal of all decorations from the Kaaba⁵². Wahhab advocated strict observance of Sunnah, social justice for Muslims, and active jihad against the infidels. Those unwilling to reject the vestiges of paganism were condemned as unfaithful and should be suppressed. Among his followers were the Saudites, the royal family in Saudi Arabia today. They were first defeated by Turks, but regained power in the 20th century, not without the support of Great Britain and the United States.

One related trend was the murids⁵³ of Shamil in the Caucasus. The Shamil movement had a genetic affinity with the Arabian movement of Muhammad Wahhab. It is a revival of Old Islam, the more barbaric components in particular. To say nothing of slave-trading! Slave trade was practiced in the Islamic world until recently. Slave trade was only abolished in Islamic countries in 1980s and 1990s though actually surviving today.

The main component of Wahhabis is certainly the law. Remember the Taliban⁵⁴, a Wahhabis movement specifically controlling beard length for men over a certain age. It appeared that a man over 30 should wear a beard as long as that of Prophet Muhammad. Moreover, Wahhabis detailed human life all round. This presumably guaranteed salvation.

When discussing the more barbaric vestiges, I meant the Wahhabis notion of divine restriction, of Allah's restricted mobility. The idea is inherent in Wahhabis. They maintain that the main goal for a Muslim is creating the kingdom of justice. This is actually impossible as no justice is possible on the Earth without God, without defeating death that will otherwise devour justice. And evil cannot be defeated without the intervention of Christ.

The other major trend in Islam major, in addition to Sunni ⁵⁵ following the sacred tradition, is the shii ⁵⁶. Shii is an Islamic trend followed in Iran and Azerbaijan. Shii also accepts the five pillars though, characteristically, relying both on a council of scholars like in Sunnah, and an Islamic leader, the hereditary caliph, for the correct interpretation of Islam. A sequence of imams⁵⁷ securing religious continuity would guarantee adequate interpretation of the Quran. This is somewhat similar to our notion of religious hierarchy for the correct interpretation of the Scripture. For them, however, it was the hierarchy of initiates rather than hierarchy at large. This is related to Gnostics in a most implicit way. Shii actually starts from gnosticism. That is, a sequence of imams – twelve in all – shared a secret knowledge inaccessible for the profane. The process went on until the 10th century when the last imam departed to reappear some time in the future.

The first Imam Ali⁵⁸ was killed in a feud and then worshipped as a martyr along with other imams. Martyrdom, that is self-torment or self-torture, is regarded as God-pleasing. This is the origin of the scene you might have seen on TV: Muslims beating themselves with pieces of iron. They believe that self-torture deserves merit and brings divine power. For us it looks more like the stabbing and flagellating priests of Baal. Not a salutary action. The martyrs venerated by Shiis are not the Christian martyrs. While a Christian martyr is witness to death defeated, his death confirming that death was defeated by Jesus Christ, a Shii martyr demonstrates his obedience to Allah, and willingness to torture himself for the sake of Allah. The two conceptions are quite different. A Shii notion is slavery and a Christian notion is freedom.

We also think that the notion of imams as keepers of spiritual light is shamanistic rather than anything related to divine revelation. Indeed, God is the Creator of all people and He has a message for all people. Of course, different people accept the message as they wish. But we have neither secret tenets nor secret doctrines for God's teaching is mystery. It is not secret but profound and only revealed to those who live by it and know the implication of the words. As we see it, the Shii idea of spiritual light is quite wrong. It is just an attempt to pass fiction for objective mystery.

For us the Ali and Muhammad's grandson Hasan ibn Ali – whose graves

are major Shii sanctuaries – are not the heroes worshipped by Shiis but rather our primordial enemies as Ali was among the first caliphs⁵⁹ destroying Christians systematically. Wars against Christians had been common since the days of Muhammad, but it was Ali who initiated anti-Christian genocide. It was his personal achievement.

Shii also differ from Sunnites by temporal matrimony.

Islam accepts various matrimonial schemes. Thus a Muslim can have four lawful wives and an armful of concubines, as the Quran puts it⁶⁰ – that is, as many as he wishes. Of course, he must support them all.

Shii extends the scheme with temporal marriage contracted for 1 to 99 years or, to be precise, from 1 hour to 99 years. More often the contract is made for 1 hour. The scheme is generally used for rape and prostitution. That is why Shii countries, unlike Sunni Islamic countries, have no prostitution. In the meanwhile, prostitution is not banned in either. The high moral standards of Islam indeed! Objective evidence proves the contrary. It would be wrong to say that all Muslims are like that. Many of them follow Sunnah in practice. But the very roots of the doctrine are ungodly. They offend humanity, and the divine will.

And the worst of it is that Islam admits of any sin except apostasy. All sins are permissible towards the infidels. Thus any woman captured by a Muslim is regarded as a concubine whether she wants it or not. When Western human rights activists ransomed 4500 people in Soudan in 2001, mainly women and children, 3/4 of the women swore that they had been raped regularly. Moreover, no one is interested whether the woman is married or not. The most regrettable behavior certainly indicated double standards. This is inconceivable for us because there is no self-non-self discrimination in murder!

So what should we think of Islam, and the world of Islam? What is it? The world of Islam is certainly a major phenomenon provoked by the angel of darkness. This is the only possible interpretation. On the other hand, the world of Islam is so extended not because the people, the Christians on whom God brought down Muslims, are unworthy of being Christian. In ancient times God spoke to Abraham of his son Ismail, Muhammad's forefather, saying that "he will be like a mountain ass among men; his hand will be against every man and every man's hand against him, and he will keep his place against all his brothers"⁶¹.

Islam is so widespread because Christians have acted against God's wishes, in defiance of God's laws. As one righteous man says, Islam is the scourge of God for Christians growing lazy. And so Islam and Islamic carnage emerge in Russia today when people facing Islamic terrorism turn to TV

chewing the cud, and many refuse the guidance of God! This is a visitation of God for the people's sins.

How then should we treat Muslims? Christians should live in peace with all people. We should never offend the people of Islam. I for one will never approve the scandalous Western cartoons. I think that Muslims were right and Western "friends" were wrong in the case. As a matter of fact, the idea was to mock at religion in any form. They jeer at Christ, Islam, Muhammad, and God on the whole. This is barefaced theomachy, and let Muslims reprove it. I think that Christians should not take the side of cartoonists abusing false worship. Even if the shrines are false, the abuse is not in God's name, and it is not the way to preach Christ.

Notice also that Islam as a religion has nothing in common with us. Their God is not our God, and they do not respect Christ. They do not respect Mother of God. Their religion is very different from our belief in the Revelation and, of course, all Muslims are yet to accept Divine Revelation. Otherwise they will certainly perish with no hope for salvation because they do not believe in the Son of God. The Lord says that whoever rejects the only begotten Son of God, "will not see life, God's wrath is resting on him"⁶². Do not think that it is impossible. In fact, the Holy Writ contains implicit prophesy of Muslims coming to God some day. Psalm 72, 10 mentions gifts offered to Christ by kings of Arabia and Seba – places right in the heart of modern Islamic world.

Therefore, having confidence in salvation, we shall pray that the Lord destroy the Islamic system barring people from going over, for those departing from Islam in Islamic lands now are to be killed immediately. And we shall not only pray but also preach Christ among Muslims, to make them our brothers. For many of them are good people and, I insist on it, for the most they are good.

This is what I wanted to say today.

2. Muhammad

We are to talk of Muhammad today: who he is to sum up for the Orthodox Church, how we should regard him, and how he should be interpreted from the viewpoint of the Church and, more importantly, in respect to the Holy Writ, for the Church has no standpoint other than of God's Word.

For Muslims Muhammad is the greatest Prophet, the "Seal of the prophets"⁶³, the brilliant example even superior to Jesus Christ. His actions are exemplary, perfect; he is said to be perfect despite his all-too-human foibles, and his style is immaculate. Even now, the style of the Quran is used in literacy tests.

So who was he in truth? Was he a Prophet? Can a Christian think of him as a Prophet?

To find the truth, a review of his life and fates, his mission, and his message to humanity at large is appropriate. For Muhammad as a person is not an ordinary politician, heretic or teacher. He is a figure of global importance comparable to Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster or Alexander of Macedonia. Since he ranks among the great by right, and his cause survives, we should make an estimate of his career.

How do we know about him? Islamic studies are largely inhibited by the fact that the bulk (99 per cent) of information on Muhammad comes from Islamic sources. No contemporary evidence was supplied by his opponents, adversaries or any disinterested persons. We have nothing to match, so to say. Our situation is somewhat similar to that of future scholars investigating the lives of Ron Hubbard⁶⁴ or Grigory Grabovoy⁶⁵ two hundred years after. Moreover, available Islamic sources or, more precisely, written evidence, were far away from Muhammad's days. Muhammad's biography was eventually recorded a hundred years after his death, and the hadith were completed at the same time, almost a hundred years – not mere decades – after his death.

This certainly poses a great problem because, despite the efforts (titanic efforts indeed) that Muslims made to verify this or that hadith, or this or that tradition, study of Muhammad's life, that is, interpretation of individual events tends to accumulate errors with the lapse of time.

For example, early stories of Muhammad's migration from Mecca to Medina tell that he hid in a cave and a whirlwind prevented his enemies from finding him. Later versions involve a mysterious spider spinning his web over the cave mouth. Thus a real episode was fantasized.

The problem is there but I think it immaterial. For the most important

spiritual principle, the key spirit of Muhammad's life remains.

Muhammad was born in 570 – tradition having it as the Elephant year when Ethiopians attempting to seize Mecca and destroy the Kaaba were defeated. His father, Abdullah, died before he was born, leaving the boy half-orphaned.

Muhammad was a 46th-generation descendant of Ishmael, and a descendant of Abraham through Ismail, Abraham's son by his concubine. Therefore the prophecy of Ismail was realized in Muhammad and his disciples: "he will be like a mountain ass among men; his hand will be against every man and every man's hand against him, and he will keep his place against all his brothers"⁶⁶. Muhammad ... appeared as a scourge of God for whoever forsakes the Creator.

Arabia was in the tribal state at the time, with the exception of South Arabia. Most Arabs worshipped idols while respecting a supreme deity called "Allah" almost a century before Muhammad. The name of "Allah" first occurred in writing some time in the 5th century BC. The main temple for this deity was the Kaaba traditionally associated with Abraham and even Adam. The temple of the black rock "lighter than water" contained the main idol of Kaaba's divine patron, Hubal – or Baal, the Baal that Prophet Elias fought against. Most interestingly, the Quran never condemned the Hubal cult even though Muhammad destroyed the idol.

Hubal was presumed to have three daughters, the pagan goddesses Al-Lat, Al-«Uzza, and Manat. They were planetary deities, mediators before Allah or Hubal, and the cult was so widespread because the Arabic world, like mankind in general, believed that God the Creator is too distant to worship and minor deities should be found close by, more intimate, more tame if you will, to bow to and respect.

In addition to the popular paganism, Arabia practiced many other religions. First, there were the powerful Judaic communities. There had been a large and strong Hebrew kingdom in Yemen shortly before Muhammad was born. St Arethas⁶⁷ and his 4299 martyrs refusing to forsake Jesus Christ had been executed by Jews in Yemen. They are remembered in prayer on 24 октября old style, the eve of the Red октября revolution day. It was they who witnessed Christ among the Arabs.

The Hebrew kingdom was destroyed by Ethiopians for the persecution of Christians, and Jewish tribes were scattered about the paradise peninsula. As a matter of fact, the Jews knew perfectly well that many Arabic tribes, though not all, were blood descendants of Abraham and, consequently, of Shem and Ham⁶⁸. There is a notion of a "black Arab". Emir Khattab⁶⁹, for one, was

referred to as “the black Arab”. For Arabians, the true black Arab is a descendant of Ham. It is a discrimination of sorts like the blue and red blood. I do not know if Khattab is a classical example of the “black Arab” but the notion remains. Jews recognizing Arabs for their relations had many converted to Judaism. There were Arabian Jews and Jewish tribes.

Christianity was also professed among Arabians. The Christian community with Christian bishops in Yemen may be cited as an example. Many Christians inhabited the coast of the Persian Gulf. There were Christian Arabic nomads too. Some Ghassani tribes⁷⁰ wandering at the borders of Byzantine Empire were also Christian.

Regretfully, they were mostly non-Orthodox. Arabia was outside Byzantine limits, and whoever was persecuted within the Empire – heretics, Manichees, anyone perverting evangelism – took refuge in Arabia. They generated a syncretic union similar to Moscow today with its various and preposterous notions and no true conception of Christianity. So Arabs often knew Christianity in heretical form. In the Quran and various tales Muhammad often meets “Christians” arguing in the way we would never imagine. For instance, Muhammad contests the doctrine of God being Allah, and Jesus Christ and Virgin Mary as additional deities. Clearly, the Church professed nothing of the kind. Muhammad seems to know nothing of true Christianity, except by hearsay.

And among the mass of contradictions some people say that, “we follow no tradition, we are successors to the religion of Ibrahim, that is, Abraham; we are pure monotheists and will only bow down to the One God”.

According to the classical “Life of Muhammad”, his advent was predicted by various foretellers. Thus a sorcerer and astrologer predicted the birth of a great prophet on his parents’ wedding day. Christian heretics and Hebrews predicted a prophet among the Arabs. Muslims believe that all these prove the genuine mission of Muhammad.

Muhammad was a sickly child prone to fits. At about the age of three when he was staying with his grandfather and tended by a wet nurse, he fainted. He was promptly brought back to his mother unless he died in infancy.

Muhammad recollected that he was approached by some spirits who opened his bosom, took out his heart and removed a black clot, then put his heart back and closed his body. He was thus cleansed of some filthiness.

According to Ibn Hisham⁷¹, Muhammad had a mark on his back similar to a slash which Muslims believed to be a symbol of prophecy and his main identification, like a birthmark. Interestingly, some nations think that birthmarks are offensive. This is certainly superstition though people with

birthmarks are generally more emotional and nervous. This is explained by pigmentation and metabolic imbalance. Superstitious people, however, believe that birthmarks are evil. They are sometimes described as “witches marks”, identifying a witch in medieval times. Arabians, on the other hand, believed a birthmark to be a symbol of Muhammad’s mission.

Muhammad grew up to become a proficient merchant. He was employed as a clerk by a rich woman by the name of Khadijah⁷² and subsequently married her. He was 25, she was 15 years older. He loved her passionately and took no other wife until her death because he was very much attached to her. Khadijah was his assistant, and she convinced him that was a prophet and his mission was willed by Allah. The apparent misalliance proved to be happy.

Incidentally, Muhammad was said to be a fairly gifted merchant, and the idea of his illiteracy is doubtful. Indeed, operating his business throughout the Middle East almost up to Persia, and certainly visiting Syria, he could hardly figure out (using literal rather than yet non-existent numeral system) being illiterate as he never went to school.

A sign of his imminent mission was his contribution, at the age of 35, to the reconstruction of a heathen shrine, the dilapidated Kaaba. A ship was wrecked at the time and Arabs came marauding according to custom. They plundered the ship including the planking and stocks, and decided to use the plunder with good intention to reconstruct the Kaaba. The point was who was to lay the celebrated black stone, the most sacred gift of Allah. Muhammad was chosen as the most truthful man in Mecca. He was charged with laying the black stone. That was a sign of his imminent mission as Muslims see it.

In 610 when Muhammad was 40, he was summoned to prophecy. Interestingly, it is described very much as a classical case of shamanic disease. The term designates a man unprotected by baptism and God’s grace, and assaulted by evil spirits. It usually happens like this: a shaman hears slow and beautiful signing from afar, or distant rocks or trees announcing imminent commandment. The man is usually frightened by the strange phenomena. And if he shows weakness, the evil spirit – the shaman spirit – visits him, breaking and torturing until the man agrees to be a “wizard”, a shaman. The word “shaman” is translated in Russian as a man in charge of secret knowledge.

A similar or, to be precise, an identical situation is that of Muhammad. He often retired to Hira⁷³ to pray for a true way. When climbing the hill one day in the Ramadan, he heard the rocks and trees saying: “You are the herald of Allah. You are the Apostle of Allah, rejoice you Apostle of Allah”. Looking around, he saw none but the hailing rocks and trees.

Muhammad retired to the Hira cave to pray every night, bringing his food,

and only returned to Khadijah for more food. One morning Muhammad prayed in the Hira cave until the truth was revealed to him. An angel appeared saying: “Read!” The chosen one answered: “I do not know how”. And the Prophet goes on: “He held and crushed me to exhaustion. Then he released me saying: “Read!” Again I answered: “I don’t know how!” He seized me again, squeezing till my strength failed. He then set me free, commanding: “Read! In the name of the Lord who created man out of a bundle!”

Muhammad was thus forced to utter the words that the spirit put into his mouth, squeezing him, or even strangling, according to alternative hadith.

We asked Muslims in a recent debate why the creator wants to break his servant’s will. They retorted that Isaiah had live coal applied to his lips⁷⁴. As a matter of fact, Isaiah volunteered for the ordeal. God asked: “Whom am I to send, and who will go for us?”⁷⁵ Isaiah asked to be purified, he strove for prophecy. His will was free. And the coal did not scorch but rather purified, as we all know. Purification by God is mysterious. Notice that the God-given fire descending from heaven on the Holy Sepulcher on Easter Eve is not scorching at the outset! We are all aware of the miracle. By contrast, Muhammad’s is a case of violence against man, and the exact copy of shamanic decease!

Interestingly, shamanic tribes respect a man resisting shamanic decease most. He is said to be most noble and respectable. Such men are scarce, for the devil is very strong in this outer world. Muhammad was frightened by a spirit subsequently known as Jibril – that is, Gabriel – though never introducing himself. It was Muhammad’s kinsman Warakah⁷⁶ who said it was Jibril.

Anyway, what happened after the vision? The Prophet went back with the revelation and a nervous cramp in his neck, as Ibn Hisham put it. «He came to Khadijah muttering: “Wrap me up!”. She did, and he asked: “What is it, Khadijah?” She told him what it was, and he said: “I am frightened”. And she answered: “Oh no, don’t worry, for I swear by Allah that Allah will never offend you since you are kind to your kinsmen, truthful in your speech, merciful to the poor, generous to visitors, and helpful to the unfortunate”. Khadijah took him to Warakah ibn Nawfal, her paternal cousin. He adopted Christianity in the days of innocence, and knew Arabic writing. He had even copied some Gospel texts in Arabic by God’s will in former days, but he was old and blind at the time. Khadijah said: “You son of my uncle, listen to your nephew”. Warakah asked: “What did you see, nephew?” The Prophet described what he had seen.

And Warakah said: “It was the angel that had been sent to Moses. Oh would I be young again and live to the day when your people reject you!”

The elected asked: “Will they reject me?”

Warakah answered: “Whoever brings what you have brought is always quarreled with. Would I live to the day, I would lend you a hand”.

Warakah died soon after, and revelation was interrupted because the prophet grieved so as to try to jump down from high rocks. But each time climbing a mountain peak to jump down, he met angel Jibril saying: “Oh Muhammad, you are the true messenger of Allah!” So he calmed down and went home. This happened each time the revelation was interrupted».

The hadith⁷⁷ says that on leaving the cave Muhammad witnessed the revelation again. He saw a giant angel (black, according to hadith reports) reaching the skies and sitting on a throne. Wherever Muhammad turned, he kept seeing the vision. He was horrified by the sight, by that terrible vision haunting him.

How shall we interpret the vision? There were visions indeed. There is ample evidence of Muhammad’s falling into a trance, as attested by eyewitnesses. He bathed in sweat in cold weather or blushed to the roots of his hair. Some say that he even lost consciousness and frothed at the mouth but the hadith deny the evidence. Anyway, here are some points to consider.

First, the visions were accompanied with violence; second, the angel never introduce himself, third, the angel does not deliver of the dread. Remember what archangel Gabriel visiting Virgin Mary said first? “Hail you the Blessed”. And Zacharias was told: “Do not be afraid”. If Zacharias and the Holy Mother were told not to be afraid, why was Muhammad not soothed by his angel? In fact, the latter seems to enjoy torturing the man.

The Russian term “bes” is known to derive from the Sanskrit “horrifying, scaring”. Many people may have suffered demoniacal assaults making them sick, horrified and scared to death. And we know the remedy – the sign of the cross, for the condition is caused by the torturing devil.

It is of interest that similar things happened to our ancient saints. The Holy Fathers mention an elder visited by an angel being rather vague but not black. By contrast, it was a light angel. As we know from the Script, Satan can appear in the guise of a light angel. The visitor said: “I am archangel Gabriel, and God has appointed you through me as a great messenger”. The elder retorted: “Who am I to be appointed by God? I only serve Christ the Savior” and crossed himself. The false archangel Gabriel vanished immediately. The situation is quite similar except that the elder was protected against his destroyer by a sign of the cross, while Muhammad was not.

Anthony the Great⁷⁸ says that evil spirits often visited him in the guise of angels, offering gold or presenting themselves as God’s agents, as follows: “Believe me, my children, I saw the devil disguised as an uncommon giant

having the cheek to say that, “I am the Divine power and wisdom”. (The spirit visiting Muhammad also presented himself as God’s spirit, the holy spirit, or the spirit of Allah). “Ask for whatever you wish, Anthony”. What was Anthony’s response? Anthony says: “But I spat at his mouth and attacked him with all my might in the name of Christ. The sham giant waned in my hands”.

Quite a different attitude! Why so? Muhammad has chosen the way of pride at the onset. He denies the holy community and the revelation. He wants to explore new ways. Explorers generally discover new ways though by no means for the best.

Another interesting point is that after the vision Muhammad was haunted by terrifying suicidal thoughts. Persistent craving for suicide is a remarkable trend. It is only inhibited by the spirit who seems to hook him to a spiritual needle, if you will. What does this indicate? This indicates subjection to satanic influence.

As a matter of fact, this is what Muhammad believed. For a long time he believed in being attacked by shaytan – that is, Satan (shaytan being the Arabic version of Satan). It was only Khadijah, his wife, who could assure him that he was actually God’s agent, a faithful servant of God. Why? Because he does well.

What a logic! Our rule is to shun our good works, is it not? One should never boast of one’s good works. Muhammad’s wife, however, supports his vanity. We must remember that our good works are done with God’s strength and for God’s sake. Yet the wife says: “But you did it by yourself, and it means that God will not abandon you”. There is no sin like pride, and he is given to pride.

The revelations occurred regularly in a while. And the messenger, the false agent of Allah, the angel, sent him preaching. Muhammad preached for 13 years (not quite, because he only had revelations but was not sent preaching in the first three years). Then he preached in Mecca for another decade, and failed. He was mocked and only supported by a small community of neophyte Muslims, and, of course, by Khadijah.

Having failed with preaching, Muhammad made a mistake: being in desperate straits, his most loyal allies seeking refuge from persecution with the Christian ruler of Ethiopia, the Negus⁷⁹, he decided to make peace with heathen Quraysh⁸⁰. He recited the Quran⁸¹ one day and coming to the phrase: “have ye thought upon Al-Lat and Al-«Uzza and Manat, the third, the other?” – the three goddesses worshipped by Arabs – he said: “Here are the noble cranes to rely upon for protection”.

In fact, he followed the primary pagan principle allowing simultaneous

worship of their deities and the Creator. The idea is quite on modern lines. Some people want to visit magicians and sorcerers, and worship God, promoting a permissive society.

Muhammad was inspired to reconcile with heathens but Muslims reproached him for contradicting his own censure on paganism. And Jibril said that Satan inserted his verses in the revelation of Allah. Satan crept in and inserted a wrong text to confuse Muhammad. Jibril reassured Muhammad, saying: “Never mind, do not worry. In fact, no prophet will escape Satan putting evil in his mind”.

A fascinating version indeed! A revelation occurs but the author is of no importance.

Doubting whether the revelation came from God or from the devil, Muhammad resorted to a test: Khadijah said that, “if it is Satan, he must be voluptuous. Let us test it: you sit down and I sit behind you. Tell me when Jibril arrives”. Jibril came, Khadijah shed her veil and was naked. Muhammad asked: Can you see Jibril? No, – she said, – he retired. You can see now that he is the angel of God. If he was not, he would fall upon me”.

A strange argument considering that an angel cannot marry, for angels are sexless. A peculiar and most superstitious view indeed!

Of course, the test is immaterial. Spirits are actually tested by other criteria. In the case of revelation, as John the Divine says, “every spirit which says that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit which does not say this is not from God: this is the spirit of Antichrist”⁸².

In fact, the Old Testament says that if a prophet or dream-teller appears with a sign or a miracle, and the sign and the miracle come true, and he says: “Let us go after other gods, which are strange to you, and give them worship”, do not obey him even then, for the prophet wants you to abandon the God of your fathers, who delivered you from Egypt, the land of slavery⁸³.

Muhammad never applied the criterion. His spirit never spoke to him of Jesus Christ. Notice that the Holy Fathers do not say that the apparition will reject Him. He will not confess and celebrate the name of Jesus Christ Incarnated, God the Son, the Son of Man and, at the same time, the Son of God.

Muhammad did not profess the faith but renewed the doctrine, rejecting the God of the Prophets. Evil interference was obvious, and the results represent the spirit of ill will and hostility.

Meanwhile, the heathens wanted Muhammad to produce some signs. Ibn Hisham describes in a most vivid manner how the Quraysh, Muhammad’s kinsmen, came to him saying: “You know that you say you are the agent of Allah, and you know that we love gold, we love silver, we love women, and we

love ample gain. We know that you love all these too. You are a businessman; you do business and do it well. So you cannot say that you are no grabber. Make a heap of gold appear here”. He answers: “I cannot do this”. They say: “Well, we had a shaykh⁸⁴. He was a good man, the shaykh. He died. Raise him from the dead”. He says: “I cannot do it either”. Then they say: “Well, you threaten us with eternal fire if we do not obey you. Well, take the fire down. Right now, a little, just a bit. Make a bit of the sky fall on us. Let us have the awards or suffer the retributions you threaten us with”. He answers: “I can do neither. I am only a messenger. And the Quran is my only witness”. They say: “All right, no harm. We know a man is teaching you. But we do not trust him, no way. We do not trust you either. We do not pay attention to you clacking tongue. Who are you to talk anyway?”

Yet Muslims told them that, “he is a true messenger, for he is no sorcerer, poet or priest”. He is no sorcerer for he does not blow or spit on strings (common witchcraft involving string stretching, incantation and spitting across, to put an evil curse). He is no poet for his the Quran is unrhymed. And, he is no priest for the lack of proper rituals accepted among the Arabs. Consequently, he is a Prophet. It never occurred to them that he might be an imposter, even though it was so simple and obvious. Interestingly, when early Muslims came to Ethiopia, one of them adopted Christianity because the beauty of it surpassed all the exhortations of Muhammad.

When Khadijah and Muhammad’s protector (who never adopted Islam but protected him to the end of his days) died, Muhammad and his advisors were put under boycott and he was in danger of death. An attempt was made on his life when some tribes colluded to have their young men saber Muhammad at night for his preaching and refusal of their gods. They wanted to involve as many as possible in the feud, to avoid individual responsibility. Having surmised the design, Muhammad asked a friend to lie down in his bed and cover himself with his blanket. The killers wanted to see the victim first, but found Ali in his stead. They spared his life, and Muhammad escaped to Medina where he had already established contacts and where most of his community had moved.

Muhammad flees to Medina in 622. The year marks the Muslim era, the Hijrah⁸⁵. He travels with his friend Ali. They are pursued. An interesting story describes Muhammad as a singular man making contact with an alternative world.

A party is chasing him, led by a man locating Muhammad with magic arrows. Yet the arrows say: “Do not pursue him”. He retorts: “I will pursue him all the same”. The dialogue is repeated three times. At last, when the sorcerer

still refuses to do as the arrows command, his horse falls with broken legs, and the pursuer falls to the ground and sees a black whirlwind. Recognizing that Muhammad is protected, he returns to Mecca, and Muhammad escapes to Medina. Was it an intercession? If so, who was the author?

Having quarreled with Judaic tribes in Medina, Muhammad changes the direction of worship. While he used to bow towards Jerusalem as the Hebrew do, he now turns to the Kaaba surrounded with idols at the time. There is a substantial Muslim community, for jobs are scarce and means of subsistence poor. The question is of survival. Then Muhammad has the blessing of Allah for robbery.

In a sacred month, Muslims makes a surprise attack on a Quraysh caravan, kills the guards (only two escaping) and brings home rich plunder. The robbers were somewhat embarrassed. Plundering a caravan was simple and easy. Arabs regarded robbery as natural. No daily plunder was a wasted life. Well, they were barbaric tribes, don't you forget it. There was the primitive system. So caravans could be plundered. Yet there were some sacred months – four in a year – when war, plunder and the like were forbidden. And they did it in a forbidden month!

Muhammad reassured them saying that Allah “speaks bad of wars in forbidden months but much worse of harassing the servants of Allah. So don't worry, you did well”.

The enraged Quraysh, Muhammad's enemies, equip a great army and march on Medina, declaring war on Muhammad. Muhammad's army crushes Quraysh.

The objective truth is that Muhammad kindly allowed them to buy out the captives except for his most ardent enemies. He only made them swear to give up fighting against Muslims. The tale of the Battle of Badr⁸⁶ also demonstrates the unforgiving nature of Muhammad. Thus after the defeat he ordered to find an old enemy of his, dead or alive. The man could be identified by a wound in his leg. Muhammad fought with him as a boy and won, inflicting a wound. The scar would be still visible. And whoever found the man should bring his head.

Can you imagine remembering a six-year old boy's fight! And the fight won at that! The idea of having the man's head!

The man was found among the wounded, and was beheaded. His head was brought to Muhammad who said: “Great is the Allah allowing me to overcome my enemies”. Then he had the bodies thrown in a well and said as if addressing them: “You see that you persecuted me for nothing? мая you suffer now”. His team-mates wondered: “Why, they can hear you no better than rocks”. And Muhammed retorted: “They hear me better than you do”. (Incidentally, this was

the origin of the Islamic conception of the soul staying in the body after death. It probably leaves the body and then comes back to stay. Sinners have their souls suffering within the body).

Quraysh then fit out a new army and Muhammad, inspired with recent victory, told his men that it was Allah's will. "You see that Allah is on your side and will grant you a greater victory". They met Quraysh at Mount Uhud⁸⁷. And Muhammad cheered up his men as follows: "You must know for certain that your victory is ensured, your enemies will scatter, and you will triumph over the infidels".

Quite the contrary, Muslims were utterly defeated, Muhammad was stricken with a stone in his face, losing his front teeth and fainting, covered with blood, so that Quraysh mistook him for the dead and would not chase the escaping Muslims. They were happy to do away with the faith. However, Muhammad came to consciousness and blamed the Muslims whose inadequate devotion to Allah caused the defeat.

Here is a point to consider. What would you call a man prophesying in the name of God if the prophecy fails to pass? You would call him a false prophet. What is the general opinion? The general opinion is that the author of unrealized prophesies is a false prophet not to be listened to or frightened by. He is a traitor daring to speak in the name of God. And the Prophet Jeremiah describes the Lord saying: "I gave them no orders, and I said nothing to them: what they say to you is a false vision and wonder-working words without substance, the deceit of their hearts"⁸⁸.

When Quraysh were told that Muhammad survived, they equipped a great army again to crush him. But Persian Muslim suggested digging a trench around Medina. Quraysh did not know how to cross the dig as they were nomads and could not assault fortifications. So they retreated after a brief siege. That is how Muhammad gained the advantage.

Muhammad arranged with the Meccans to be let in. He approached the city with his army, and the Meccans had him promise to spare the surrendered (displeasing the Muslims, of course). Muhammad made a ceremonial entry in Mecca not long before his death. He destroyed all idols surrounding the Kaaba, worshipped the black rock, and was the sovereign ruler of Mecca. Several days after he had all the residents adopt Islam on penalty of death. Some of his enemies, opponents and poets believing their own verse superior to the Quran, were put to death.

What was all this about? In fact, the principal argument for the Quran as an exceptional revelation of God was its beauty, for no one could write as beautifully as Muhammad. So the impudent authors were beheaded

immediately to prevent potential rivalry. Competence was nipped in the bud.

Muhammad was making ready for the war against Byzantine. His army, however, failed to encounter the enemy⁸⁹, also in spite of his prophecy. He wished to make war by himself but suddenly became quite sick and died in the arms of his favorite wife Aishah⁹⁰.

He was unconscious but regained consciousness the day before his death and went to the mosque to speak in this way: “Harken! The fire is flaring up. Discord darker than night is approaching. For the love of Allah, bear no malice against me. For you know that I only permitted what the Quran permits and forbade what the Quran forbids”⁹¹. Then he felt worse and died in Aishah’s arms.

To revert to Muhammad’s prophetic service. Revelations were granted him until the end of his days but the greatest one in his view was the flight to heavens astride the magic horse al-Buraq⁹² when staying in Mecca before the Hijrah ⁹³.

The angel Jibril appeared to him one night and had him mount a beast with the head of a mule and a human face, al-Buraq by name. Al-Buraq carried him instantly to the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem (which had not been there for some six hundred years though he says it was). He later described the Temple of Solomon (to everyone’s wonder as the Temple is generally known to be nonexistent). He then once again mounted the Buraq and was taken to the various heavens. In the First heaven he met Adam, the righteous men and sinners. The sinners were tortured and the righteous men reveled. In the second heaven he met Jesus Christ and John the Baptist. So he met various earlier prophets in various heavens until he met Abraham in the last and seventh heaven and, having crossed a garden and coming to the last blooming lotus, he saw Allah.

No explicit description of Allah is available today. In a doubtful hadith, Muhammad describes Allah as a green cylinder. But the hadith is thought to be of little value and should not be referred to in discussion with Muslims. Anyway, according to the hadith, he saw the green figure.

Allah instructed him to offer prayers 50 times per day.

On his return, Moses asked: “How many prayers were you told to offer?” He said fifty. Moses: “Go back and ask to reduce the number”. The Prophet returned and asked to reduce it to 10 times. And he continued asking until it was reduced to 5.

Moses urged him to ask again but Muhammad answered: “I am ashamed to ask of reduced prayers and will not do it anymore”.

So Muslims are to offer their 5 namaz per day.

What kind of a story is it? There must be some truth in it. For example, riding the great horse, he saw a halting caravan, and a jug of water covered with a cloth against flies. He took off the cloth, drank the water, put the cloth in place, and was carried on. Another text describes him discovering a runaway female camel in Syria. He told Quraysh what he had seen, and they found the camel right there. Interestingly, however, his beloved wife Aishah said that Muhammad traveled with his soul only while his body stayed in his bed. The flight seems somewhat shamanic.

A clue to the phenomena is found in a story of Anthony the Great. In the days of his hermitage he was sitting at the mouth of his cave one day, weaving baskets for visiting pilgrims. He suddenly felt that a rod he was holding was drawn from behind. He turned back and saw a creature looking like a donkey with a human face. Do you remember it? It was al-Buraq who came to frighten him in company with various reptiles. Anthony the Great spoke to the creature saying: "I am Anthony, and if you want me, here I am. If God wants you to kill me, do so, and if not, go away" and made the sign of the cross over it. The beast and all the frights vanished at once. Anthony uttered: "Confound the creature meddling with my baskets" and kept on weaving. It is clear who the apparitions were.

Popular opinion subsequently ascribed various signs to Muhammad. One was water running his fingers. It was also said that when he snapped his fingers, the moon broke in two, and the mountain was seen in between. The tales actually remind us of the wonders produced by sorcerers like Simon Magus or Doctor Faustus⁹⁴.

Compare the "Life of Muhammad" and a tale of Doctor Faustus... The stories are compatible, you know! Doctor Faustus drills a hole in the wooden floor and brings out wine, just like the case in question. The wonders are very similar, actually absurd and non-provable. Muhammad never healed a sick man or a blind man, nor did he raise anyone from the dead. He did well to none. His wonders were all illusions, fantasies. Moreover, in all probability, he did not work them at all. Popular opinion developed at a much later time. And his wonders are getting even more illusionary with time. It is a popular error also associated with Jesus Christ, with all the false gospels and apocryphal works painting His life in quite fabulous colors.

In fact, Muhammad said that, unlike other prophets, he came with no signs, and his primary mission was the Quran. There were some visions but only imaginary and unnatural, and most probably, later authors invented Christian and Hebrew prophets working wonders to demonstrate their mission, which Muhammad never did. So that was their problem to solve.

Muhammad's family life deserves special notice, being far from exemplary though considered otherwise. According to the Quran, Muhammad was privileged. He was entitled to 1/5 of the plunder, and an unlimited number of wives. This has interesting connotations.

The Quran says that Muhammad's wives are mothers to Muslims. Muhammad, however, is not the father of Muslims. How can his wives be their mothers? Why, this is quite simple. The point is that one cannot marry one's own mother. Muhammad worried about his wives getting married after his death, so he declared his wives to be inviolable. This is quite personal.

He had thirteen wives. Khadijah was the first, and there were other wives after her but only one, Aishah was virgin. She was his second wife and he married her a month after the death of Khadijah. He fell in love with Aishah when she was 6, and he married her and had sexual intercourse with her when she was 9. A girl of 9 is still regarded eligible for marriage in Islamic countries. Then he took other wives, mostly the widows of his brothers-in-arms.

His adopted son Zayd⁹⁵ had a beautiful wife, and Muhammad fell in love. Then it was revealed to him that, first, he could have no adopted children. Well, let it go at that. Another revelation said that Zayd should divorce his wife, and so he did. And then Muhammad was inspired that he could take the divorcee for his wife. The revelations made to measure indeed! Of course, he was not quite happy with that wife because of the violent scenes of jealousy between her and Aishah. In fact, all his wives were at loggerheads with each other, and Muhammad was hard put to deal with them. So when Aishah surprised him with a concubine and scolded him, a fresh revelation said that wives abusing the Prophet would come to a bad end. The conflicts abated but smoldered until Muhammad's death.

Of course, there was some good in Muhammad: he was fair enough, often charitable to those who needed food, clothes and the like. Moreover, his word was as good as gold and Arabs named him the Truthful or the Loyal. On the other hand, Muhammad was rancorous, vicious and dissolute at heart. Due to his inconsistent nature, he abandoned God and is deplorably staying in hell's dens.

He said that he saw an approaching fire and was then enveloped in flames. It happened because he fell from God, failed to render Glory to God and to glorify the Holy Trinity, and never received baptism though he was acquainted with Christians and could adopt the true faith. Moreover, he allured many people still following his way and perishing in the course. He mistook an evil angel for God's angel, the angel of light, and that dark angel deceived him as he

had deceived Eve.

Khadijah argued for the presence of God's angel in a very primitive way, and not without reason. Saint Paul warned: " But I have a fear, that in some way, as Eve was tricked by the deceit of the snake, your minds may be turned away from their simple and holy love for Christ"⁹⁶. Eve was tempted in innocence. She was seduced without considering Satan's proposal. The same happened to Muhammad: he was seduced and proved defenseless against evil spirits. He had good reason to read the Quran regularly, apprehending evil intervention. He was afraid of magic spells until his death. He lived in fear and awe even though, as a God's agent, he ought to be brave. But he was quite the reverse, for he had no inner witnessing of truth.

On him falls the prophecy in 3 Ezra of dragons of the desert seizing the earth⁹⁷. Muhammad is the great dragon yielding to the enemy and ruining many who had faith in him. His service is carried on, service of the scourge. Muslims are the scourge for us when we fall from the arms of the Lord. If we are not dedicated to God, the one enticed by the eternal enemy will come and scourge us.

Nevertheless, this will not go on forever. The Script tells us that the kings of Arabia will eventually offer gifts to Christ. This is predicted in the Psalms of King David⁹⁸. And we therefore believe that many Muslims will eventually adopt the veritable Christian faith, worship Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, and join our fraternal community. By way of example, mention may be made of many saints who had been Muslims before but then adopted Christian faith and Divine Revelation. It happened even in the days of Muhammad.

3. Questions and answers

I would like to know how Muhammad obtained the Quran. Did he write it or receive it from above as Moses did?

There was an apparition, Jibril by name. It appeared regularly. Muhammad felt very sick: he heard a terrible rumble in his head, some swelling clash, and he shivered. Then he had an inspiration and pronounced it like a sermon. He never recorded it. He delivered his sermons and everyone learnt them by heart. Of course, some people put them down on pebbles or palm leaves. But the text emerged as a sermon, and Muhammad sermonized what occurred to him, it was a superhuman speech hurting him awfully. He said that the agony was not comparable to anything he had suffered.

And the Quran starts from the records?

Just so. Records were made, and then more and more records. After Muhammad's death when Muslims waged war against all flags (Muhammad initiating the conquest of all other tribes), subsequently involving half mankind, experts knowing the text by heart were killed in the wars generating the need for registering and consolidating the Quran texts. Several versions were compiled and then Uthman, the fourth caliph⁹⁹, chose the Quran of Zayd, Muhammad's former adopted son, a copyist slave. He combined all the texts. Zayd arranged the texts as we see them today. Interestingly, the surahs differ from Muhammad's sermons in length though many mistakenly think that they are identical. Some sermons are equal to corresponding surahs while others may only cover one half of a sermon. The compilation is purely mechanical.

What was the guiding principle? According to the Islamic doctrine of eternal the Quran in Allah's mind, the texts were arranged in descending powers: from the longest surah down to the shortest 114th. In fact, the mechanical compilation was governed by size rather than chronology.

All the alternative versions, which were many, were burnt off.

Was Muhammad the only author of the Quran? Or someone else added his own visions?

Again, the question is whether the records reconstructed from memory are reliable. For instance, the final ayats were written by a scribe from memory. But was the memory trustworthy enough? Of course, they start from the sermons of Muhammad who believed them to be inspired by alternate spheres. This is similar to the "Isis Disclosed" by Blavatskaya¹⁰⁰. She thought that the "Isis Disclosed" was only written in her hand and certainly inspired, even though the text represents her singular ideas. For example, she compiles

quotations deriving from various sources. Nevertheless, she believed that it was actually authored by a spirit. This is also true about Muhammad.

How long did Muhammad live?

He lived for 63 years.

How many children did he have?

He had 3 sons dying in infancy, and 5 daughters with only three reaching adulthood.

Does it mean that he was only perpetuated in daughters?

Muhammad was only succeeded by his daughters.

Are there any surviving descendants?

Yes, of course. The King of Morocco¹⁰¹ is one. There are some in Russia. Muhammad's descendants survive today.

What about his adopted son? Are his descendants...

Since he was proclaimed not to be... Actually, the surviving descendants are the Sheikhs ruling in Saudi Arabia, descending from Zayd¹⁰². Yet, the adoption being revoked, they are informal only.

The Quran emerged in a heathen, non-Christian environment, and was not intended for anti-Christian strife.

There was no such intention, for Muhammad believed that Christians were his allies against the Hebrew. As a matter of fact, Muhammad's original intention was to unite with the Jews but he failed in that, and only Christians supported him. That is, they actually saved early Muslims in Ethiopia from extermination.

Is there anything positive in Islam? Islam actually emerged in a pagan environment as a monotheistic religion.

What is meant by "positive"? Any confession has some positive elements. There are right and just elements in paganism too, like recognition of the Creator, or traditional Arabic virtues including loyalty, sticking to one's word and aversion to treachery. Both paganism and Islam have their positive concepts.

As of monotheism proper... Well, worship of the one false God is no good, is it? In principle, monotheism could be referred to as satanism as well. But this won't do. Worshipping the one Satan is bad. I am not saying that Islam is satanism, it would not be right. It just means that monotheism is not progressive in itself. All the more, there were the Hebrew, and the Christians. Native Arabians knew both.

Could the Quran represent the Old Testament for Arabians? Could it be a step to the Gospel?

By no means so. The Quran derives from human sources. It cannot be too

highly stressed that Muhammad was no scoundrel, no way. It would be wrong to present him as a willful freak like Grabovoy, ready to do anything for money. This would do him an injustice. He did have some inspirations though they certainly came from an evil source. The Old Testament revelations, however, derive from a good source. Religion is not to be structured in political terms. Religion means human attitude to a superhuman world, the world of angels. In this view, Muhammad was primarily tempted by the evil, which is certainly quite different. Moreover, I daresay that it was the Quran that prevented Arabians from adopting Christianity.

Could you specify the criteria for differentiating between a false and a true prophet, to fit the case of Muhammad?

Criteria of a prophet are specified by the Scripture. First, it is the recognition of complete revelations granted by the Old and the New Testament. This means recognizing the fullness of revelations without modifying and distorting the Scripture. Thus whoever says that the pharaoh chasing Moses is the same pharaoh who wished to build the Tower of Babel designed by Haman¹⁰³ who lived 1000 after the event, is obviously not the prophet of God, for he must have had actual knowledge.

Additionally, a true prophet shall profess the faith of all earlier prophets, the faith in God, His Word, and His Holy Spirit – that is, the Trinitarian God of the earlier prophets. And a prophet must recognize divine Incarnation as the Great Revelation. For “God, who at sundry times and divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds”¹⁰⁴. This means that the great revelation of Incarnation must be accepted as accomplished fact. A prophet must therefore accept Jesus Christ as God and Man. Clearly, God cannot lie; He has no need to deny His words. A prophet cannot budge from his position. And a true prophet would never say that future prophecy would be corrupted. For, if God holds the Revelation, He would hold it forever. He would not save the Quran to exclude the Scripture! God would be absolutely infallible.

Then, he shall preach, bringing people into the fellowship of Christ – that is, His historical Church, for the act of divine Incarnation is the act of history and the community of the Covenant is one. The single community of the Covenant starting with Adam and surviving to date is the Ecumenical Orthodox Church.

A true prophet shall also support his mission with predictions of the future, to be borne out when they come true. See how earlier prophecies were realized!

A prophet shall use the words that could alter man's soul, his inner life, bringing him to confession and absolution. The question is not of mere penitence, this should be realized! Why, Judas repented and then hanged himself. Repentance should lead to absolution.

A true prophet must remember Christ saying, "that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father"¹⁰⁵. Therefore he shall always support his mission.

He must also speak to reconcile men with God without heeding other opinions. Prophet Jeremiah says: Is not my word like a fire? sayth the Lord, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?"¹⁰⁶ Can you see it? His word must fight man's inherent evil, independent of the man.

These are the basic criteria. Whoever does not match them is a false prophet.

Did Muhammad actually fall into epileptic fits when he had revelations?

As I have said, some symptoms of epilepsy are evident even though overruled by the hadith – frothing at the mouth, convulsions. And he actually felt awfully chilly and feverish. He was nicknamed the Muffler (al-Mudathir – ed.) for wrapping himself up.

Muhammad has been mentioned in manuals of psychoneurology as a typical case of epilepsy. On the other hand, epilepsy with its causes and etiology is little studied and difficult to distinguish from demonical possession.

Could you tell how Muhammad treated the Gentiles? Does the attitude persist today?

Contemporary view specified the two categories of Gentiles: the polytheists and the so-called people of the Book. The latter including Christians, Hebrews, and Sabaeans¹⁰⁷ (an idolatrous sect in Arabia subsequently loosely identified with Zoroastrians), were tolerated with the exclusion of missionary work. They were to pay the taxes but were disabled and could not oppose Muslims on penalty of death.

Polytheists were to adopt Islam on penalty of death.

This was his attitude. And it persists today. Muhammad made a sharp distinction: in cases where Shariah requirements are impracticable, strange faith is not to be abused. Thus Muhammad preaching in his first, Meccan period was inspired that gentile gods were not to be abused or else the infidels would abuse Allah. Just believe in Allah and never abuse others! Yet that was good when Muslims were knowingly weaker than local heathens.

The principle is now followed in the countries where Muslims are in the minority and unable to exercise power, allowing to regard Islam as a peaceful

religion hurting none, supporting no evil deed or act of terrorism. This is only the guise of Islam.

As soon as Muslims gain power, they declare that any renegade Muslim is to be put to death. Remember a recent case of a man adopting Christianity in Afghanistan¹⁰⁸.

You say that Muslims believe Muhammad to be infallible. What is sin in Muslim interpretation?

Sin is abuse of law. Abusing the law of Allah is a sin.

Even though it is not in conflict with moral standards? Muhammad's plunder of caravans is not sinful...

No, it is not a sin.

And cutting off a thief's hand...

It was commanded by Allah.

So Muslims are not embarrassed by discord?

Admittedly, morality is a secular version of commandments. There is no concept of absolute morality. There is a concept of validity starting from the Scripture. This is true about Christianity, Islam and any other religion. So God's will is the primary factor. Yet it must be admitted that Muhammad is open to criticism even in terms of the Quran. For example, one day when he was preaching Islam to a man, a blind man came up begging to be admitted. Muhammad sent him away thinking that a blind good-for-nothing is of no use to him. Even Allah reproached him for treating the blind man so badly. So Muhammad is not faultless even by the Quran standards. And yet he is officially respected as impeccable!

I would like to ask again about the Wahhabis and the acts of terrorism in Chechnya, and the armed gangs: what are all these? Is this the Muslim religion of Muhammad, or some alternative trends similar to Christian schisms, each in its own way?

Muhammad Wahhab¹⁰⁹ was an 18th-century reformer of Islam. Islam in Arabia was actually dissolved in paganism, and almost exhausted. It was but a dummy. So Wahhab intended to reconstruct Islam in accordance with the Quran and the Sunnah. He urged to purify Islam of the reverence of saints, cults of sacred places, Sufism and its inheritance, requiring the most precise, quite literal compliance with the Shariah, i.e. the law.

He founded the sect referred to as the Wahhabism. This is the official religion in Saudi Arabia, for the Saudites had promoted Wahhabis doctrines in the 18th century. They were first defeated by the Turks but then came to power with British support. The Saudites ruling in Saudi Arabia are still following the Wahhabis. It is also officially professed in Mecca and Medina, in the core of

Islamic world.

As regards terrorism ... The point is as follows: war is directly related to Islam. War is presumed to be as important for true Islam as the sixth pillar. But this is optional. There are only five basic pillars of Islam though many believe that war is as obligatory as adherence to the five pillars. Others argue against it not because they think that war is bad but because it cannot be regarded as the sixth pillar since it is not always practicable. Indeed, Jihad is absolutely impracticable in Saudi Arabia! Why they are all Muslims! Yet war against the infidels is a must, a doctrinal requirement for a Muslim.

We now turn to the issue of terror. Suicides, the Shahids, first appeared in Islamis sects. The Assassins¹¹⁰ were the first to use hired assassins and suicides, and there were Shiis sects.

Other facts generally associated with terror are largely authorized by Muhammad. Thus Muhammad set a fixed rate for ransom. Practical aspects of hostage and ransom were authorized by Muhammad and prescribed in the Sunnah. They are described in every detail: who is to take or to be taken hostage, who is to be or not to be held hostage, and who is to be killed on the spot. And all the specifications are complied with as far as possible.

As regards slaveholding... It was authorized by Muhammad. There was a case of a dying Muslim setting his slaves free in his will. Muhammad was enraged. He summoned the slaves, divided them in 4 groups, released one and enslaved all others.

This is also true about rape. Does Islam permit rape? Not of a married woman if she is not a slave. And if she is, the Quran permits rape explicitly. To quote word for word: “...marry of the women, who seem good to you, two or three or four; and if ye fear that ye cannot do justice (to so many) then one (only) or (the captives) that your right hands possess”¹¹¹.

On the other hand, well water poisoning possibly emerged at a later date. Suicide involving murder certainly originated with the development of explosives. Suicides first appeared in the 19th-century¹¹². They were the first Shahid killers. But common murder, fighting, and hostage were instituted in the very first stage.

This is an interesting point of mentality: compare the attitude of Christ with that of Muhammad. Everyone knows the story of Christ and the forgiven adulteress. The Lord told them: “he that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her”¹¹³. And they departed conscience-stricken. And the Lord said: “Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?”... “Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more”¹¹⁴.

Now to Muhammad. A woman came to him saying that he was pregnant

by adultery. She said: “Oh envoy of Allah, I am guilty, so punish me!” The Prophet summoned her guardian and told (him): “Treat her well, and bring her to me upon delivery”. (The man) did as he was told, (and when he brought her after delivery) the Prophet had her stoned and then prayed for the repose of the dead. When Omar asked: “Oh envoy of Allah, you pray for her (even though) she committed adultery?!” the Prophet retorted: “She has repented for seventy (others)”¹¹⁵.

How does this correlate? We see identical situations with opposite results, for Muhammad has no absolving authority and thus cannot forgive sins. He believes that to escape eternal torture, man should be put to death on the Earth. So Muslim cruelty is a genetic extension of impossibility of forgiveness, absolution on the Earth.

As a matter of fact, this is often ignored. There is a great deal of talk about a genetic cruelty of Muslims, which is mostly wrong. Most Muslims are decent folk and pleasant personal contacts. There is no question of genetic cruelty! The question is of believing that slaughter is the only way to overcome evil. Can you see it? They do not know that nature can be improved, that one can purify oneself, that one can be justified by virtue of and in communion with Christ. They are simply unaware of it! For them there is no alternative.

Of course, imposing faith with the sword is typical for Islam, demonstrating Muhammad’s inner foible.

On the other hand, the Euro-Islam originating in 1809 represents a renovated, user-friendly Islam in European style. In Russia it is the Jadidism. They are trying to include into their everyday life a general idea of worshipping God, recognizing the authority of Muhammad, and reading the Quran as historical writing. This Islam type or, strictly speaking, no Islam at all, is more or less peaceable. Few accept it and many digress these days, for half-faith would not sustain: people either fall into atheism or move up to traditional Islam.

Godspeed to us all, let us pray and hope that Muslims adopt Christianity and refuse to follow their false prophet.

Birth, baptism, childhood, school

Father Daniel (Daniil Alexievich Sysoev) was born in Moscow on 12th января 1974 in the family of artist teachers. His parents, Alexey Nickolaevich Sysoev and Anna Midhatovna Amirova, received baptism after Daniel was born, but the child was not baptized until 1977. This happened because his grandmother would not have the boy christened and even threatened to seize him with the assistance of Party authorities should the baptism be administered in secret. This was a substantial danger at the time, so the christening was waived.

For a long time his parents attended church without Daniel. When the boy was seriously ill three years later, a woman of faith knowing that the child had not been baptized warned them of a terrible fate of a mother failing to christen her child, and an imminent tragedy for an unchristened child should he pass away. The warning governed his mother's decision to have her child baptized. On 31 октября, Daniel received the Holy Baptism in the Church of the Life-Giving Trinity on *Vorobyevy Hills*. The anointing priest was father *Evgeny* (Eugene).

Daniel always wanted to be a priest. His mother said that he loved preaching far more than playing. He and his parents were permanent members of the Church of St Nicholas the Miracle Worker in *Kuznetskaya Sloboda* (the Smithery Suburb), and also attended the minor Cathedral of Donskoy Monastery and the Church of the Deposition of the Venerable Vestment in Shabolovka. When his father was sexton in the Church of the Beheading of St John the Baptist in Moscow Region Afineevo village, Daniel assisted him at the altar and sang in the choir.

Daniel loved stories of holy men, and painting. The latter was quite natural for an artist's son. He painted wonderful lands of mountains and waterfalls, and villages at the foot of a hill. There were many (five and more) churches in the villages, and beasts in the woods. And the sky of incredible radiance!

Studies came easily to him, and he read much. His school years also involved a confession of faith. When he fell ill one day, his teachers came to see him. His mother led the surprise party in. But, instead of greeting them, the visitors expressed irritation at the “home icon-screen”. This was followed by official reforming at school. First, they resorted to persuasion hoping for a “sobering effect”. Daniel went through the public disgrace with fortitude, declaring before the class: “Yes, I do attend the church, I believe in God and I

know the prayers”. This is how he confessed his faith even as a first grader.

Theological Seminary and Academy in Moscow

On leaving school in 1991, Daniel entered Moscow Theological Seminary. He was an extremely penurious student. His parents could not weed him. Luckily, he solved the problem by using his encyclopedic knowledge to coach slow students. He was reading excessively. Nothing could divert him from theological knowledge that brought man to God as he believed. In the depths of the library, he dug out almost forgotten books. He did a lot of translating. He was deeply convinced that Orthodoxy alone holds the salutary truth. As a Seminary student, Daniel did his work of penance as a chorister and preceptor of Cantor school choir.

On 19 декабря 1994, Right Reverend Rostislav (Devyatov), Bishop of Magadan and Chukotka, made Daniel Sysoev a reader. That сентября Daniel Sysoev met Yulia Mikhailovna Brykina. On 22 января 1995 they were married in gymnasium church of St John the Theologian, Apostle and Evangelist by priest Dionisius Pozdnyaev. Daniel Sysoev, then a Seminary student, and his wife rented a flat in Sergiev Posad. Upon graduation they moved to Moscow. Their daughter Yustina was born soon after.

On 13 1995 Daniel was ordained to the office of a deacon by Right Reverend Evgeny Bishop Vereysky. The office was performed in the Church of the Assumption of Virgin Mary in Gonchary (Bulgarian town house). He stayed there until января 2001 when he was ordained to the ministry. On 14 июня that year Daniel graduated from Moscow Theological Seminary and entered the Extramural Department of Moscow Theological Academy.

His record of service is strikingly extensive and diversified. Father Daniel officiated in the Church of St Peter-and-Paul in Yasenevo (Moscow), was secretary of Missionary Education Center “Hexameron”, worker of a rehabilitation center for victims of totalitarian cults and false religious movements in the name of St John of Kronstadt. The future priest authored the book entitled “Chronicle of the Beginning” (M., 1999), edited collected papers “Hexameron versus Evolution” (M., 200) and almanac “Divine Revelation and modern science”. He published more than a dozen articles of creative and anti-sectarian orientation.

Father Daniel taught religion to senior school students of Orthodox Classical Gymnasium in Yasenevo from сентября 1995, and led, with the blessing of the Holy Patriarch, missionary Bible discussions for victims of sectarian and occultist activities in Krutitsky Patriarch’s House from August 1996. From 1997, Father Daniel led Thursday afternoon Bible discussions (commented recitals) in Krutitsky House.

On 24 мая 2000, the Department of religious education and catechization granted priest Daniel Sysoev with a letter of commendation for his active teaching and catechization practices.

Priesthood

In января 2001 Daniel Sysoev was ordained to the ministry and made clergyman of the St Peter-and-Paul's Church in Yasenevo under hegemon-abbot Melchizedek (Artyukhin). His second daughter, Dorothea, was born that year.

Between 2004 and 2009 father Daniel did a great deal of traveling and teaching: he taught at Perervinskaya Orthodox Theological Seminary in Perervinsky St Nicholas Monastery – first liturgics and then missiology; and he visited (outside a mission team) many eparchies in Russia and elsewhere (including two visits in Macedonia in 2007 and 2008). Father Daniel was invited by the Moslem party to assist in two public debates on “The Bible and the Koran as Divine Revelation” (December 2006) and “The Conception of God” (February 2007).

Father Daniel periodically appeared in TV- and radio programs.

From 2006 Father Daniel led regular afternoon Bible studies (commented Bible recitals) in the Church of St Thomas the Apostle in Kantemirovskaya street. He began with a chapter of the Old Testament, explaining almost every verse from interpretations of St John Chrysostom and the Holy Fathers. Then a chapter or a fragment of the New Testament was recited, also commented by father Daniel.

In 2007 Reverend Father Daniil Sysoev led a missionary group visiting baptismal villages in Tatarstan. Father Daniel primarily saw his missionary work as Christian message. His Liturgy always included a sermon, a word in prayer in funeral service and on any other occasion.

In 2008 a summer missionary trip to Kyrgyz Republic was organized with active contribution from father Daniel: he led discussions in local Orthodox parishes, talked to local residents, and baptized some citizens. One part of the missionary group visited a Moslem region near Osh town. And in 2009 the missionary group visited Zainsk district center in Tatarstan. That year Daniil Sysoev repeatedly reported being threatened for his opinions of Islam.

Martyrdom in Christ

That morning father Daniel recited liturgy in the Church of St Thomas the Apostle in Kantemirovskaya Street, and made his communion. Then he baptized an infant and administered the sacrament to a man previously leaving Orthodox faith for occultism. Several hours later father Daniel led a Bible discussion and then conversed with all comers till late at night. Then the

masked murderer burst into the church, shooting and shouting: “Where is Sysoev?” Father stepped intrepidly from behind the altar and was mortally wounded. He died still unconscious several hours later.

Father Daniel often reported threats leveled at him by Moslems. Yet he considered preaching Christ as his most important mission. He was murdered in ministry, after receiving a confession, in his tippet with the cross.

The funeral service in the orphaned church on Friday night 20 ноября 2009 was attended by Daniil Sysoev’s friends and family, missionary school pupils and local residents.

Moscow bid farewell to the recently deceased father Daniel that Monday. The burial service was performed in the Peter-and-Paul Church in Yasenevo where the dead man’s father had officiated. The service was led by Archbishop Arseny (Epifanov). Hundreds Orthodox Christians came to memorize the priest.

Almost a hundred members of Moscow clergy gathered in the church, all in white and with lights. Only the mourning family stood out against the white robes. After the funeral service Patriarch Cyril read the lity for the dead at the coffin and recited the pontifical Word. After three-hour prayers the cortege advanced to Kuntsevo Cemetery.

Father Daniel was buried in the grounds of the Church of the Icon of Our Lord Jesus Christ of Setun in Kuntsevo Cemetery in Moscow. The fortieth day obit for the deceased priest Daniil Sysoev fell on his name day, the Memorial Day of Prophet Daniel on the 30th (17th old style) of декабря.

The pastoral deeds of devotion

Daniil Sysoev helped people to discover and understand the Truth. He envisaged preaching Christ among the world nations. Father Daniel appeared as a missionary and preacher among adherents of different creed. In one of his interviews he said: “We have baptized more than 80 Moslems in our church. Among them are Tatars, Uzbeks, Chechens and Daghestani.” He opened a way for spiritual and moral development in present-day environment and encouraged people to follow the Apostles’ principle: “If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.” (Rom. 12, 18).

Father Daniel knew and loved God with all his heart and all his soul, and his love was true and sacrificial. He was a partisan of *uranopolitism* (having derived the term from Greek *Uranos* – sky and *polis* – city) – a doctrine of Divine laws preceding the earthly. The followers of uranopolitism maintain that communion in Christ prevails over kinship or ethnic relations, and Christians on Earth are only pilgrims and strangers from heaven.

Father Daniel suffered martyrdom in Christ. Life in Christ is an integral

part of spiritual life for every Christian. This good cause has an assistant and man of prayer in father Daniel. For all Orthodox Christians believe that he lives and prays for all lost sheep.

Pontifical word of Cyril Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia

ON THE BURIAL SERVICE OF PRIEST DANIIL SYSOEV

We are paying our last tribute to father Daniil Sysoev, a Moscow pastor well-known to all of us. His life was taken by an evil will. He died a violent death. But pastoral ministry is a most peaceful service, for the Lord called us to peace and anything a priest says when appealing to people is imbued with this Divine appeal to build one's life on God's law, maintaining peace with one's near and distant. For two thousand years of church life, this witness of God's peace was continuously apprehended with a happy throbbing of heart. People have opened and are still opening their hearts and minds to the Gospel, fascinated by Divine truth, despite the many temptations and scandals, and life patterns promoting ungodly existence; and they try to arrange their life by the Word of God. However, the two thousand-year history of the Church also indicates something else. The Word is a huge challenge for many, requiring reexamination of one's whole life and mental attitudes. In some cases the Word provokes unbelievable and inexpressible spite rather than happy heartbeat, focusing on fierce struggle against the Word. These days are no exception. As in the past, human spite attacks witnesses of God's truth, including acts of violence.

There is nothing new in human history. As Tertullian strikingly has it: "A martyr's blood is the seed of Christianity". Those who have no other arguments, those blinded with anger attack the messengers of God's truth with spite and violence. Incapable of opposing the priestly word in their minds and hearts, they attack the pastor with slander and malignant gossip, and even raise their hands against them. Father Daniel did a great deal to assert God's truth. He took part in various discussions and debates. He witnessed God's truth to the best of his ability and talent. But his strongest word was probably the word we are witnessing. When one is killed for God's truth, it means that the truth strikes those who do not accept it. It has a great power. The statement made by Tertullian has been supported by the whole history of Christianity, and each new blood spilt for Christ sowed abundant seeds of faith and brought abundant harvest,

We know that the selfless life and death of father Daniel is a great seed planted into fertile soil to yield fruit.

Prayerful intercession before this coffin should make us ordained to holy order reflect seriously on the sense and nature of preaching in modern world, and the importance of preaching the Divine cause so as to reach the heart and

mind of the audience; so that the days of our earthly life were not spent for nothing, in spiritual idleness and laziness.

We believe that the Lord will take the soul of His servant in His heavenly abodes. For he kept his faith in death even. Let us pray in our hearts for the memory of the murdered servant of God priest Daniil.

† Cyril Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

Books published by father Daniel

Witness for the doctrine of Divine Creation

Chronicle of the Beginning – M.: Sretensky Monastery Publishing, 1999. – 2nd ed. – M.: “Axios” Publishers, 2003.

“No one but God” or how long was the day of creation? – M.: St. John of Kronstandt Counseling Center Publishing, 2003.

Fundamentals of Orthodox Christianity

Why are you not baptized yet? – M.: “Danilovsky blagovestnik” Publishing, 2004; 2nd ed. – M.: Prophet Daniel Church in Kantemirovskaya Publishing, 2008.

Why attend church every Sunday? – M.: Prophet Daniel Church in Kantemirovskaya Publishing, 2007, 2008.

Marry a nonbeliever? – M.: Prophet Daniel Church in Kantemirovskaya Publishing, 2007.

Discussing the “Song of Songs”. – M.: Prophet Daniel Church in Kantemirovskaya Publishing, 2008.

How often shall you receive communion? – M.: Prophet Daniel Church in Kantemirovskaya Publishing, 2009.

Instructions for immortals, or What shall you do if you die all the same ... – M.: Prophet Daniel Church in Kantemirovskaya Publishing, 2009.

Polemics with adherents of different creed

Anthropology of Seventh-Day Adventists and Jehovah’s Witnesses. – “Russkii Khronograf” Publishing, “Hexameron” Missionary Education Centre, 2002.

A Protestant’s Stroll in an Orthodox Church. 2001; St. John of Kronstandt Counseling Center Publishing, 2003.

Marriage to a Moslem. – M.: Prophet Daniel Church in Kantemirovskaya Publishing, 2006.

Even though father Daniil Sysoev will certainly look after his family from heavens, we must not stand aloof. To say the truth, one cannot bring up and educate three children in Moscow on a pension for the loss of a breadwinner. Besides, a martyr’s family is not entitled to a miserable life, and we will all support mother Yulia with no prayer alone.

“He said he would be murdered. I asked him who would leave us to, myself and our three children. He said he would give us to a good home. “I will give you to Mother of God. She will take care of you”.

Those who wish to support the family of our father Daniel – mother Yulia

and her three daughters: Yustina, Dorothea and Angelina, can use bank remittance:

Recipient: Sysoeva Yulia Mikhailovna

Account of the receiver: 4081 7810 2382 5490 1389

Bank of the receiver: OAO Sberbank Russia

Lublinskoe dept 7977/01315

PIN: 7707083893

Loro account: 30101810400000000225

BIC: 044525225

ETF: Yandex. Den'gi [Money]

41001490442413 – transfer into account

y.sysoeva@yandex.ru – transfer via e-mail.

ETF WebMoney.

Purse nos:

R999920625415 -rubles. Z439597687838 – UJS dollars.

Please mark “Subscription for father Daniel’s family”

Обсудить на форуме

Примечания

¹ - Ummah is a religious community and a form of social organization of people. Theoretically the Muslim community unites Muslims from all over the world regardless their ethnic and cultural background.

² - Justin the Philosopher (Justin the Great, Justin the Roman, Justin Martyr) (about 100 – about 160) – an early Christian apologist and one of the Fathers of the Church who was among the first who implanted notions of Greek philosophy to Christianity and initiated theological interpretation of history. He is remembered on июня, 1(14).

³ - Omar Khyyam (about 1048 – after 1112) – a Persian poet, mathematician and philosopher. The Poet is famous all over the world by his quatrains called rubaiyat. The lines quoted in the text are from the following rubaiyat: The Ball no question makes of Ayes and Noes, But Here or There as strikes the Player goes; And He that toss'd you down into the Field, He knows about it all – He knows – HE knows!

⁴ - Saddam Hussein Abd al-Majid al-Tikriti (1937 – 2006) – the Iraqi state leader, the fifth president of Iraq (1979 – 2003), the secretary general of Iraqi regional organization Ba'ath party, the marshal (1979); dethroned in апреля, 2003 as a result of the american-british troops invasion; sentenced to death by the Iraqi court.

⁵ - The House of war is divided into two parts: the House of actual war (jihad) and the House of conciliation. The difference between them is shown in the Quran (an-Nisa», 4– 90: Women): “They long that ye should disbelieve even as they disbelieve, that ye мая be upon a level (with them). So choose not friends from them till they forsake their homes in the way of Allah; if they turn back (to enmity) then take them and kill them wherever ye find them, and choose no friend nor helper from among them, except those who seek refuge with a people between whom and you there is a covenant, or (those who) come unto you because their hearts forbid them to make war on you or make war on their own folk. Had Allah willed He could have given them power over you so that assuredly they would have fought you. So, if they hold aloof from you and wage not war against you and offer you peace, Allah alloweth you no way against them”.

⁶ - Shariah is the moral code and religious law of Islam described in the Quran and Sunnah. It sets ethic standards of Muslims and defines norms of their behavior.

⁷ - The Quran (literary meaning ‘reading’ or ‘recitation’) is the central religious text of Islam, a homiliary, a set ceremonials and laws, prayers and allegories told by Muhammad in Mecca and Medina. The earliest scrolls date to VII – VIII centuries. Surah is chapter of the Quran, Ayah / Ayat (usuall translated as ‘verse’ or ‘sign’) is the smallest unit of the Quran.

⁸ - Jizyah (compensation), a per capita tax paid by non-Muslim citizens living in Islamic states.

⁹ - Al-Imran: The Family Of Imran 3:83.

¹⁰ - Jihad (effort) is a holy war for faith. This largely involves armed struggle against the enemies of Islam, and struggle for faith in a more general sense like correcting individual inclinations, encouraging obedience to shariah rules, stark refusal of all things condemned by shariah, etc. An amicable Jihad means personal improvement, in other words, self-perfection, and struggle against all things improper, by word and deed.

¹¹ - Wahhabis are the followers of a religious and political movement in Islam, initiated by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–87) in Central Arabia. Striving to purify Islam, Wahhabis advocated moral simplicity and fought for Arabian consolidation. Wahhabis is the official ideology of Saudi Arabia and a common trend in other Arabic countries.

¹² - Namaz / salat (prayer, worship, one of the main rites of Islam – daily five-fold prayer.

¹³ - Zakah – (purifying) – religious “purifying” charity for Muslims, prescribed by the Quran with amounts and rates specified by shariah.

¹⁴ - Ramadan, ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar (hijrah) when Muhammad first had the revelation. Ramadan is the month of obligatory fasting.

¹⁵ - Aqidah, Islamic creed or articles of faith. Quranic formulation includes belief in God, angels, prophets, scriptures, and the Day of Judgment.

¹⁶ - al-«Ankabut: The Spider 29: 62

¹⁷ - Sufism, Islamic mysticism originating in the 8th and 9th century and elaborated between the 10th and 12th century. Sufism typically combines metaphysics and ascetic practices, the doctrine of progressive conception of and union in God via mystic love (in the illuminative way). Sufism had a pronounced influence on Arabic and, in particular, on Persian poetry (Sanahi, Attar, Rumi).

¹⁸ - al-Baqarah: The Cow 2: 102.

¹⁹ - Hadith, report of the words and deeds of Muhammad and other early

Muslims; considered an authoritative source of revelation, second only to the Quran (sometimes referred to as sayings of the Prophet).

²⁰ - al-Àraf: The Elevated Places 7: 178.

²¹ - al-Ma'idah: The Food 5: 116.

²² - az-Zukhruf: The Embellishment 43: 2–4: “By the Scripture which maketh plain, Lo! We have appointed it a Lecture, in Arabic that haply ye may understand. And Lo! in the Source of Decrees, which We possess, it is indeed sublime, decisive”.

²³ - an-Najm: The Star 53:19–23. The three Goddesses worshipped in Arabia were: Al-Lat, Al-«Uzza, and Manat.

²⁴ - St. Nicholas of Serbia, (1880–1956) (Nikolai Velimirovich, Bishop of Ohrid and ZiCa, eminent divine and religious philosopher.

²⁵ - an-Nisa": Women 4:56: “Lo! Those who disbelieve Our revelations, We shall expose them to the Fire. As often as their skins are consumed We shall exchange them for fresh skins that they may taste the torment. Lo! Allah is ever Mighty, Wise”.

²⁶ - Matthew 5:44–45.

²⁷ - an-Nisa": Women 4:136: “Believe in Allah and His messenger and the Scripture which He hath revealed unto His messenger, and the Scripture which He revealed aforetime. Whoso disbelieveth in Allah and His angels and His scriptures and His messengers and the Last Day, he verily hath wandered far astray”.

²⁸ - Jinn, creatures known in popular belief in pre-Islamic Arabia and mentioned numerous times in the Quran, parallel to human beings but made out of fire rather than clay.

²⁹ - an-Naml: The Ant 27: 15–54.

³⁰ - al-Qasas: The Narrative 28: 6–16.

³¹ - Revocation of religious rules is legitimized by Quranic acts and authentic hadith reports. Some revelations and rules, however, are not to be revoked.

³² - Ibn Saad, Tabaqat, vol. 1, p. 225; Ibn Saad, Tabaqat, vol. 1, p. 228; Muslim, 17, 4192.

³³ - Matthew 17, 14–21.

³⁴ - “There is no god but God, and Muhammad is the messenger of God” (shahadah, witness). “(We take our) colour from Allah, and who is better than Allah at colouring. We are His worshippers” (al-Baqarah: The Cow 2:138). “Unto Allah belong the East and the West” (al-Baqarah: The Cow 2:142).

“Whencesoever thou comest forth turn thy face toward the Inviolable Place of Worship” (al-Baqarah: The Cow 2:149).

³⁵ - Qiblah, direction Muslims face during prayer (towards the Kaaba in Mecca), or a prayer wall in the mosque into which the michrab (niche) is set, indicating the direction of prayer.

³⁶ - 1Corinthians 1, 23–24.

³⁷ - Sirat al-Mustaqim, al-, the right way; the straight path. The “right way” is also applied to the Quran itself, as it reveals broad moral directives, with some legal prescriptions, as guidance for humanity.

³⁸ - Greater-Bayram, feast of the Sacrifice (qurban). Also known as Id al-Adha. Celebrated at the end of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, on the tenth day of Dhu al-Hijjah, the month of pilgrimage.

³⁹ - St Simeon of Thessaloniki (Symeon of Solun) (d. 1429), archbishop and saint. Formal glorification took place in 1981. Remembrance day – 15 (28) сентября. Cit. from his “Vs. heathens or Mohammedans”.

⁴⁰ - Succibi (pl. of succubus) (from lat. succubare – lie under), incubbi (pl. of incubus) (incubus, from lat. incubare – lie above) – demons of lust.

⁴¹ - Ali Vyacheslav Sergeevich Polosin (b. 1956), former Otrthodox priest, now Islamic theologian and public figure.

⁴² - Luke 10, 29–37.

⁴³ - Muezzin, a male Muslim who issues adhan (call to prayer) in Arabic from atop the minaret five times daily.

⁴⁴ - Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement translated in Russian as the Doomsday), the most important Hebrew feat, one-day fast, the day of repentance and absolution.

⁴⁵ - Placing one’s hands at the face (ed.).

⁴⁶ - Jadidism (renovationism), social and political trend among Muslim, primarily Turkic nations.

⁴⁷ - Genesis 11.

⁴⁸ - Sophrony (Sakharov), archim. (1896 – 1993), theologian, confessor and monastic elder, pupil of St Silouan of Mt Athos.

⁴⁹ - Madhhab, school of religious law within Islam, in a broader sense – the Muslim way. Islamic law within Ahl as-Sunnah wa’l-Jama»ah (sunni) evolved in the 4 schools of law (madhhab): the Hanafi, the Shafii, the Maliki, and the Hanbali. The Hanafi madhhab – eponym -Abu Hanifah developed the methodological principles of Muslim jurisprudence. His method of legal instruction started from the Quran, Sunnah (with careful selection of Hadithat),

statements of his co-workers, analogy to existing Revelation, preference of solution contradicting the previous but more rational in the situation, agreement of theologians, and traditional opinion. The choice of available enactments was dictated by more earnest or majority opinion. Most of the modern Muslims belong to the followers of this legal trend.

⁵⁰ - Sunnah, established custom, normative precedent, conduct, and cumulative tradition, typically based on Muhammad's example. In addition, Sunnah involves actions that are desirable but not obligatory.

⁵¹ - Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–87), founder of Wahhabis, official ideology of Saudi Arabia.

⁵² - Kaaba is the cube-shaped “House of God” located in Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

⁵³ - Murids, followers of sufi charged with implicit obedience to their religious leader (sheikh, imam). Murids were largely involved in the actions of North Caucasian mountaineers in Caucasian War 1817–64.

⁵⁴ - Taliban (arab. talib – knowledge-seeking), a fundamentalist Islamic movement in Afghanistan, instituted in 1992 by graduates of Muslim religious schools (madrasah) opened in Pakistan for Pashtun refugees from the neighboring Afghanistan. The center for Taliban led by Mullah Muhammad Omar who proclaimed the “genuine Islamic” state as the objectives to be pursued was Kandagar (in south-east Afghanistan). By февраля 1995 Talibs occupied half of the southern provinces and surrounded Kabul, and in 1996 mapped into the town. By late 1990s Talibs controlled most of the country. Television and most of the popular pastimes were banned, women and religious minorities were disabled.

⁵⁵ - Sunni is, along with shii, the major branch in Islam an alternative trend. Sunnis hold the majority in most Islamic countries (except Iran, South Iraq and North Yemen). They accept Sunnah along with the Quran. Decisions on Muslim leaders (imam-caliph) are governed by “communal agreement”.

⁵⁶ - Shii is the other major branch in Islam (along with Sunni) originating in the 7th century from debates on the number of imams and identification of the last imam. Shii is divided in sects. Shiis reject Sunni caliphs, regarding Alide Imams as the only legitimate successors of Muhammad. Shii is the official religion of Iran and is also popular in Yemen, Iraq, Lebanon, Bahrain, etc.

⁵⁷ - Imam for Muslims is: 1) service leader in a mosque; 2) secular and spiritual leader in a community.

⁵⁸ - Ali (Ali ibn Abi Talib) (d. 600), the fourth of the “pious caliphs” (656–661) of the Arab Caliphate, Muhammad’s cousin and son-in-law (husband of his daughter Fatima). Shii respect him as the first Imam, and the “extreme Shiis” set him above Muhammad.

⁵⁹ - Caliph / khalif, in some Oriental Islamic countries, title of sovereignty combining spiritual and secular authority. In Turkey (as Muslim spiritual leader) valid until 1924.

⁶⁰ - an-Nisa": Women 4:3: “And if ye fear that ye will not deal fairly by the orphans, marry of the women, who seem good to you, two or three or four; and if ye fear that ye cannot do justice (to so many) then one (only) or (the captives) that your right hands possess. Thus it is more likely that ye will not do injustice”.

⁶¹ - Genesis 16, 12.

⁶² - John 3, 36.

⁶³ - Seal of the prophets (Khatam al-Nabiyyin), phrase occurs in Quran (al-Ahzab: The Allies 33:40: “Muhammad is not the father of any man among you, but he is the messenger of Allah and the Seal of the Prophets; and Allah is ever Aware of all things”), referring to Muhammad, and is regarded by Muslims as meaning that he is the last of the series of prophets that began with Adam. Some biographers of the Prophet mention that he had a physical mark (seal) of some sort between his shoulders that was regarded as one of the signs of his prophethood.

⁶⁴ - Hubbard, Lafayette Ron (1911–1986), American author known as a founder of Dianetics and Scientology. His works have won conflicting ratings.

⁶⁵ - Grabovoy, Grigory Petrovich (b. 1963) declared himself the Second Messiah capable of raising people from the dead, achieving teleportation, healing AIDS and cancer in every stage, and identifying faults in electronics at a distance. He was convicted to eight-year imprisonment under Russian Federation Criminal Code Article 159 of “Fraudulent Activities”. He gained notoriety when, according to various sources, he promised the Beslan families to raise victims of terrorism for money.

⁶⁶ - Genesis 16, 12.

⁶⁷ - St. Arethas and his 4299 martyrs suffered for Christ the King in the 5th century. Arethas was the leader of the Christian community of Najran in Arabia. The Arabian (Himyarite) prince Jew Dhu Nuwas wished to destroy Christianity in the country and ordered to kill all Christian adepts. The people of Najran remained constant in their faith, and Dhu Nuwas brought a large

army to destroy the city. The royal herald announced at the walls of Najran that Dhu Nuwas would spare the lives of those who renounced the Crucified Man of Galilee and His Cross. Failing to take the city by force, Dhu Nuwas deceived the Christians, swearing that he would not make them convert but would only lay Najran under tribute. The people ignored Arethas's advice, believed Dhu Nuwas and opened the gates. More than four hundred thousand Christians, men, women, old people and children of Najran and neighboring villages, suffered martyrdom for Christ the Savior.

⁶⁸ - Shem and Ham are the scriptural sons of Noah "and from them all the earth was peopled" after the Flood (Genesis 9, 18).

⁶⁹ - Emir Khattab, professional terrorist and leader of armed units in the self-constituted Chechen republic of Ichkeria, killed.

⁷⁰ - The Ghassanids (al-Ghasasinah, also Banu Ghassan "Sons of Ghassan), dynasty in the kingdom of Jabiyah, East Palestine (Jordan) until 636.

⁷¹ - Ibn Hisham, Abu Muhammad Abd Jamal al-Malik (d. 827), Arabian scholar from Basra. His "Biography of the Prophet Muhammad" represents the most comprehensive evidence of Muhammad's life and work. It ranks as the third important source of Islam (after the Quran and the Hadithat).

⁷² - Khadijah bint Khuwaylid (d. ca 618), first and only (until her death) wife of Prophet Muhammad, founder of Islam. Muhammad only took other wife after her death. Revered as a good and faithful wife, mother, and Muslim.

⁷³ - Mount Hira, mountain near Mecca, the cradle of Islam, said to have been the scene of the first revelation given to Muhammad on the Night of Destiny (laylat al-qadr). The Prophet meditated in the cave at the summit of the mountain. Also known as Jabal al-Nur, the Mountain of Light.

⁷⁴ - Isaiah 6, 6–7: "Then a winged one came to me with a burning coal in his hand, which he had taken from off the altar with the fire-spoon. And after touching my mouth with it, he said, See, your lips have been touched with this; and your evil is taken away, and you are made clean from sin".

⁷⁵ - Isaiah 6, 8: "And the voice of the Lord came to my ears, saying, Whom am I to send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I, send me".

⁷⁶ - Warakah ibn Nawfal ibn Asad, Christian cousin of Muhammad's first wife, Khadijah. According to tradition, assured Muhammad that his call to prophecy and message genuinely from God.

⁷⁷ - Sahih al-Buhari, one of six works of hadith widely recognized as authentic and canonical and considered the most authoritative source of hadith along with Sahih Muslim. Compiled and codified in the ninth century by

Muhammad ibn Ismail al-Bukhari. For this particular hadith see ch.1, 4.

⁷⁸ - Anthony the Great, saint (c. 251–356), founder of Christian monasticism, a hermit in Egypt.

⁷⁹ - Negus (in full form: “king of kings”), title of the emperor of Ethiopia until the subversion of monarchy in 1975. Negus was the head of the state and the head of the government, holding absolute executive and legislative authority.

⁸⁰ - Quraysh, powerful Meccan tribe at the time of the Prophet Muhammad; descendants of Qusayy, who united them. Muhammad was born into the Hashemite clan of the Quraysh tribe. The Quraysh named after their ancestor. Muhammad met with no sympathy among his fellow tribesmen but declared the Quraysh dialect to be the perfect Arabic language, which resulted in the dialect emerging as the literary language. Presently the keys to the Kaaba are held by the Quraysh clan. Surah al-Quraysh: The Quraish 106 in the Quran is directed at them.

⁸¹ - an-Najm: The Star 53:19–20.

⁸² - 1John 4, 2–3.

⁸³ - Deuteronomy 13, 1–3: “If ever you have among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams and he gives you a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder takes place, and he says to you, Let us go after other gods, which are strange to you, and give them worship; Then give no attention to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams: for the Lord your God is testing you, to see if all the love of your heart and soul is given to him”.

⁸⁴ - Shaykh, a pre-Islamic honorific title of princes or chiefs of nomadic tribes in Arabia. The term “sahaykh al-din” also has been applied to men who possess scriptural learning; a village elder in the Levant and the Middle East; sometimes, just a venerable man. Heads of religious orders are called shaykh, as are Quranic scholars, jurists, and those who preach and lead prayers in the mosque.

⁸⁵ - Hijrah (migration or withdrawal) , typically refers to the migration of Muhammad and his Companions from Mecca to Medina in 622 C.E, the first year in the Islamic calendar. Hijrah was proclaimed as the beginning of the Muslim era under Caliph Omar I (634–644). The initial date is the 1st day of the 1st month (Muharram) 622 – 16 июля 622.

⁸⁶ - The Battle of Badr, the first important battle between Muslims and Quraysh (there were minor armed conflicts between Muslims and residents of Mecca in 623 and 624) fought in Hejaz (West Arabia) in the second year of

Hijrah on the seventeenth day of Ramadan, Friday morning 17 mapra 624. Seen as a symbol of victory of Islam over polytheism and unbelief. It was a significant victory for Muslims and a major landmark in their fight against Quraysh. This helped to promote Islam until their utter defeat in the battle of Uhud. Egyptians used “Operation Badr” as a code name for the 1973 Egyptian-Israeli war.

⁸⁷ - The Battle of Uhud was fought on 23 mapra 625 at Mount Uhud in North-West Arabia by the Muslim community of Medina, led by Prophet Muhammad, and Quraysh forces commanded by Abu Sufyan from Mecca. The Quraysh requited for the battle of Badr won by Muslims in 624.

⁸⁸ - Jeremiah 14, 14.

⁸⁹ - No Greek description is available but in the Arabic world the Byzantine campaign is described as a great historic event (Battle of Tabuk). Most probably, however, the armies never met.

⁹⁰ - Aishah, daughter of first caliph, Abu Bakr; youngest and reputedly favorite wife of Muhammad. With Muhammad when he died.

⁹¹ - Ibn Hisham “Life of the Prophet”, chapter on The Death of the Prophet.

⁹² - Buraq, winged creature, usually depicted as a horse, which Muhammad mounted and rode to Jerusalem, through seven heavens, hell, and paradise, into the presence of God, and back to earth, according to the story of his Night Journey. The name derives either from the Arabic “blaze”, “glare”, “shine”; or from the Persian “bara” – “steed”.

⁹³ - Hijirath (dial. Hijir), Muhammad’s migration from Mecca to Medina. Beginning of the year in Islamic Calendar (Miladi 16/VII.622).

⁹⁴ - Simon Magus, magician mentioned in the New Testament and some other sources; Doctor Faustus, necromancer living in Germany in the second part of the 16th century, his legendary biography developed during the Reformation and has since been the subject of many literary works in Europe.

⁹⁵ - Zeyd ibn Sabith, a major associate of and private secretary to Prophet Muhammad. He chaired a commission for the final formulation of the Quran.

⁹⁶ - 2Corinthians 11, 3.

⁹⁷ - 3 Ezra 15, 29–31.

⁹⁸ - The Psalms 71, 10.

⁹⁹ - Uthman ibn Affan (d. 656), companion of the Prophet Muhammad, third caliph in the succession of early leaders. Under his leadership, the text of the Quran was standardized, with variant collections being destroyed.

¹⁰⁰ - Blavatskaya Elena Petrovna (1831 – 1891), Russian authoress initiating the Theosophy movement.

¹⁰¹ - Muhammad VI (b. 1966), 18th King of Morocco and 36th descendant of Muhammad.

¹⁰² - State structure in Saudi Arabia is governed by the Home government act approved in 1992. Accordingly, Saudi Arabia is an absolute monarchy ruled by sons and grandsons of the first king, Abdel Aziz. Koran represents the constitution of Saudi Arabia. The law relies on Islamic law. The king is the head of state. The current ruler is Abdallah ibn Abdel Aziz al-Saud, son of the founder of this state.

¹⁰³ - al-Mu'min: The Forgiving One 40:36–37: “And Pharaoh said: O Haman! Build for me a tower that haply I may reach the roads, the roads of the heavens, and may look upon the God of Moses, though verily I think him a liar”.

¹⁰⁴ - Hebrews 1, 1–2.

¹⁰⁵ - John 14, 12.

¹⁰⁶ - Jeremiah 23, 29

¹⁰⁷ - al-Baqarah: The Cow 2:62: “Lo! Those who believe (in that which is revealed unto thee, Muhammad), and those who are Jews, and Christians, and Sabaeans – whoever believeth in Allah and the Last Day and doeth right – surely their reward is with their Lord, and there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve”. Different translations describe people of the Book as people of the Script or holders of the Script. Al-Imran: The Family Of Imran 3:113: “They are not all alike. Of the People of the Scripture there is a staunch community who recite the revelations of Allah in the night season, falling prostrate (before Him)”.

¹⁰⁸ - Religious feelings ran high in Afghanistan in 2006. The court of Kabul brought a charge against the 41-year old Abdul Rakhman who had converted to Christianity 16 years before. He was in danger of death penalty under the new Afghan law primarily grounded on Shariah rules. The accused was secretly conveyed to Europe.

¹⁰⁹ - Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–87) founder of Wahhabis, official ideology in Saudi Arabia.

¹¹⁰ - Assassins (Nizaris), one of two branches of Ismaili Shiis (the other is the Mustalis). The Ismaili split in 1094 over the succession to the Fatimid caliphate. Originally in Iran, and Syria, Nizaris are found currently in Africa, the West, and South, Central, and West Asia.

- ¹¹¹ - an-Nisa": Women 4:3.
- ¹¹² - Explosive trotyl was first obtained by German scholar Willbrandt in 1863.
- ¹¹³ - John 8, 7.
- ¹¹⁴ - John 8, 10–11
- ¹¹⁵ - Imam An-Nawiwi (631–676), collected hadith Gardens of Pious The Book of Commandments 22, 60–67; Muslim 1696.
- ¹¹⁶ - John 10, 11.

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